SPECIAL ISSUE

THE RESISTANCE TURNS ONE

THE Nation.

Saying No to Trump was just the beginning

Katha Pollitt
Greg Grandin
Moustafa Bayoumi
Marilynne Robinson
David Bromwich
Bill McKibben
Khalil Gibran Muhammad
Joan Walsh
and more...

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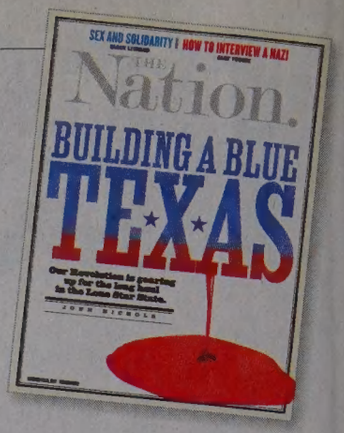

Turning Texas Blue?

Carey McWilliams, the former *Nation* editor who spent a lifetime studying and advocating for the Spanish-speaking people, is almost certainly having fits over the prediction made by many, including John Nichols ["Building a Blue Texas," Dec. 18/25], that 2018 will be a year for the Democrats.

Back in the early 1970s, we formed La Raza Unida Party to challenge the one-party dictatorship of the Democrats in Texas and in 16 other states plus the District of Columbia. We lasted a decade before we were outlawed by legislation introduced by Democrats making it harder for alternative parties to get ballot access. Since the mid-1990s, we have endured another one-party dictatorship, this time by Republicans, in Texas and much of the country. Why?

For one thing, thousands of conservative Democrats changed their party affiliation and became Republicans—just as Rick Perry, now Trump's secretary of energy, did. Second, Democrats continue to work primarily in white and black voter precincts, targeting their messaging and canvassing there. Campaign money seldom trickles down to the grassroots in the Southwestern states or South Texas; it stops in the hands of the few elected Spanish-speaking politicos and their cronies, who use these dollars for their reelection. Few want to increase the number of eligible voters.

Third, Democrats will seek out Republican women over Spanish-speaking voters, and they continue to take Spanish speakers for granted. Their consultants advise them that this demographic does not vote, when, in fact, those who don't vote either can't—because they're too young or are not citizens—or haven't been asked. Fourth, few high-school administrators register their students to vote when those students turn 18, despite the existence of a law requiring that voter-registration forms be circulated to eligible students.

Fifth, in Alabama, 56,000 Spanish-speaking people of the roughly 190,000 who live there were eligible to vote in 2012; in 2017, by contrast, only an estimated 30,000 were registered. Yet the national media never mentioned these voters.

Sixth, in 2016 Bernie Sanders never got past Austin into South Texas or over to El Paso to ask Spanish speakers for their vote. Both Clintons have made forays into South Texas time and again since the 1990s—and left with millions in donations—but they never came back to ask Spanish speakers for their vote. Good luck, Senator Elizabeth Warren, with better advice.

Seventh, immigration is important, but it's not the most important issue for Spanish-speaking voters. We did not all immigrate in the 2000s or the 1990s. Indeed, many of us—the US-born, Spanish-speaking persons of Mexican ancestry who are the majority of this demographic—have been in the United States since before there was a USA. Like Native Americans, our lands were stolen, our lives segregated, our labor indentured, our votes ignored and suppressed—as they still are, by Democrats and Republicans alike.

Texas will not turn blue without Spanish-speaking voters being asked directly and made a central part of the entire campaign, from the very top of the presidential ticket to the workers at the polling places. It would also help immensely if many candidates were Spanish-speaking themselves and spoke up for our community daily, not just next spring.

José Angel Gutiérrez
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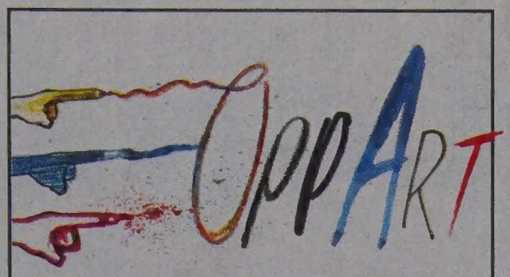
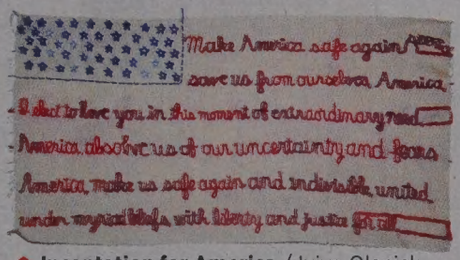


Artistic Dispatches From the Front Lines of Resistance

^**Trigger** / Edel Rodriguez


Make America safe again
save us from ourselves America
I elect to love you in this moment of extraordinary need
America absolve us of our uncertainty and fears
America make us safe again and indivisible united
under my/our wings with liberty and justice for all

^ **Incantation for America** / Iviva Olenick

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The Greater Menace

As he marks the end of his first year in office, Donald Trump, the self-proclaimed "very stable genius," stands astride the political world like a cartoon dybbuk, an orange menace of terrifying impulsiveness. With his tweet-spasms spewing venom on adversaries, his reckless fomenting of racial division, his unending lies, and his predilection for vulgar schoolyard taunts, Trump fuels rage and resistance. Already his act is losing whatever appeal it had for his supporters. Even Trump's closest aides, as Michael Wolff reports in his new book *Fire and Fury*, doubt that he has the temperament or the capacity to be president. Remarkably, despite a stock market at record heights, unemployment down, wages beginning to rise, low inflation, and ISIS on the run, Trump's approval ratings remain at record lows.

Trump's erratic immaturity makes him a constant peril. In the end, however, he is a weak president, more clown than despot. The populist postures that propelled his candidacy—the promise to "drain the swamp," the critique of "stupid" wars, the pledge to transform our "failed" trade policies and stop companies from shipping jobs abroad, the vow to revive banking regulations—have been abandoned. He has delegated his national-security policy to the generals, so the Bush-Obama wars continue, with drones and Special Operations forces striking in ever more countries. He has delegated his economic policy to bankers and millionaires, so the doors of the financial casino are being flung open again. The new tax law gives corporations more incentives to move jobs and report profits abroad. These are salad days for the lobbyists Trump scorned during the campaign. All that is left from those days is Trump's venom, the juvenile combativeness, and the cancerous politics of racial discord.

Yet Trump doesn't bear the chief responsibility for the wholesale damage being done to this country. The primary culprit is a radically reactionary Republican Party in control of both Congress and the executive branch. The GOP conference, led by the experienced "adults" Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan, was virtually unified in its attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would have stripped millions of people of their health insurance in order to roll back taxes on the very wealthy, and in passing the grotesque tax cuts for billionaires. Those "responsible leaders" now intend to use what they term a "historic opportunity" to "reform" entitlements—that is, to cut Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, centerpieces of what little shared security Americans have earned.

Trump's assault on all things Obama is simply the continuation of the full-scale obstruction organized by McConnell and the GOP Congress when President Obama was in office. The calamitous denial of climate change and the methodical rollback of efforts to address it are Republican doctrine and not unique to Trump. Trump's cabinet chiefs are drawn from GOP donors and legislators. Their calculated weakening of consumer, worker, environmental, and civil-rights protections—what Steve Bannon touted as the deconstruction of the administrative state—is a core tenet of the modern GOP. Trump's judicial appointments, through which he's stacked the courts with ultra-right-wing activists, are drawn from the approved lists of the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society.

On foreign policy, Trump's juvenile bellicosity appalls, but the thrust of his approach—as expressed in the administration's newly released national-security doctrine—is a continuation of the crackpot "realism" of the foreign-policy establishment. His announced plan to move the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem shocked many, but it only adds to the long-term US destabilization of the greater Middle East. Trump may have dropped the "mother of all bombs" on Afghanistan last spring, but that war has entered its 17th year with no end in sight. Trump complains that "we've spent $6 trillion in the Middle East" and that, with that kind of money, "we could have rebuilt our country twice." Yet his foreign policy ensures that

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The digital version of this issue is available to all subscribers January 11 at TheNation.com.

DC BY THE NUMBERS

President Trump is expected to unveil his infrastructure bill later this month. Here are just a few of the challenges it will have to address:

200

Estimated number of years it would take to fully replace the nation's drinking-water pipes at the current rate

D+

Grade given to the country's energy infrastructure by the American Society of Civil Engineers; the grid would cost nearly $5 trillion to replace

188M

Trips taken every day across structurally deficient bridges in the US; repairing them would cost more than $120 billion

$200B

Total federal infrastructure spending over the next 10 years that Trump is expected to announce; Democrats have proposed $1 trillion in new investment

—Jake Bittle

we'll waste further trillions on continued misadventures. Under Trump, the US military has dispatched Special Operations forces to 149 countries—but that's only a slight uptick from the 138 of Obama's final year.

The media, like a fun-house mirror, distort this reality. They—and far too many Democrats—are fixated on Russian intervention in the 2016 election and the chimera of Trump's impeachment. Russian meddling should not be ignored, but the far greater threat to democratic elections comes from a Republican Party fully aware that it represents a shrinking minority and thus systematically laboring to make voting more difficult for the young, minorities, and working people, even as it strengthens the stranglehold of big money over our elections.

Many liberal commentators urge that we make Trump's abuses of power central to the 2018 congressional campaigns. In fact, the threat is far greater than the bilious billionaire in the White House. To revive our democracy, Americans must first rebuke the radical Republican Party up and down the ticket. That vital step must be accompanied by a political movement to transform the Democratic Party into a vehicle of progressive reform, one that breaks the suffocating elite consensus on national security, trade policy, domestic austerity, money in politics, and more.

Impeaching and removing Trump would only leave us with the ultra-conservative empty suit Mike Pence as president and continued GOP misrule. Ousting the Republican majorities in the House and Senate would only return us, at best, to the days of obstruction and neoliberal disappointment. Democrats cannot take on America's corrosive inequality, its declining middle class, its deadly epidemics of despair, its endless wars, and its corrupted politics without a majority built by candidates with a mission and a mandate to transform this country.

COMMENT

In one calamitous year, Trump has helped rouse the resistance. Movements like Black Lives Matter and #MeToo mobilize new energy. The new Poor People's Campaign will revive a moral voice in our politics. Nascent progressive electoral efforts—from Our Revolution to the Working Families Party and many more—are recruiting and supporting bold reformers. Let us remember Martin Luther King Jr.'s wisdom: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that." After one year of Trump, we can already see the first rays of light. ROBERT L. BOROSAGE

Marcus Raskin

For him, ideas were the seedlings for effective action.

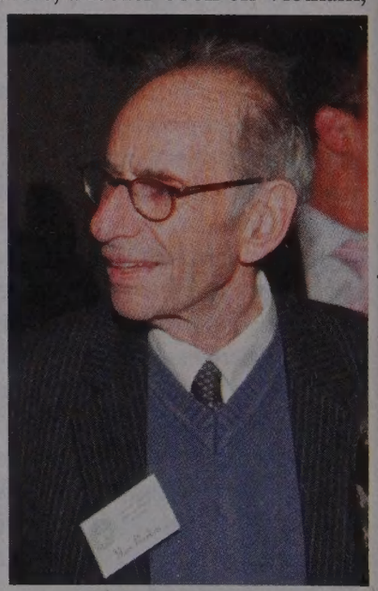
Marc Raskin, who died on December 24, was a valued friend of this magazine, to which he contributed, over many years, articles, ideas, inspiration, and wise counsel. "Marc mentored and inspired many, and touched us with his brilliance, humanity, and humor," said *Nation* editor and publisher Katrina vanden Heuvel. "He was a true radical—never dogmatic, always curious, in search of new ideas, new pathways." Former *Nation* editor and publisher Victor Navasky, who originally recruited Marc, commented: "It was my honor and privilege to invite Marc to join the *Nation* editorial board and work with him over the decades. I always learned from him and counted on him to show us the way. He combined a radical intellect with common sense."

One is tempted to dub Marc the left's premier idea man because of his immensely varied contributions to the philosophy and praxis of liberal/left organizations, but that doesn't begin to describe his influence. True, he sparked many articles, editorials, programs, and dialogues—yet for Marc, ideas were serious business, seedlings that needed to bear fruit in effective political action.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* recognized Marc's importance as a thinker early on, extolling his book *Being and Doing* (1971) as "an important indictment of our society by a political thinker who in some quarters is held to be the most brilliant in the field." An earlier book, *The Vietnam Reader* (1965), which he co-edited with the legendary Bernard Fall, became a bible for the university teach-ins that enriched the student antiwar movement. In 2003, Marc conceived the Cities for Peace program, creating a network of city governments to pass resolutions opposing the Iraq War.

Raskin was a longtime proponent of nuclear disarmament.

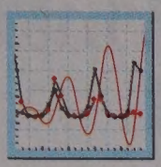
Sometimes Marc's activism carried a personal risk. In 1968, he was indicted by the federal government—along with Dr. Benjamin Spock, the Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Michael Ferber, and Mitchell Goodman, collectively dubbed the "Boston Five"—for conspiracy to resist the draft. Unrepentant after his own surprise acquittal (he wondered sarcastically if he should demand a retrial), Marc went on to co-write, with Richard Barnet and Ralph Stavins, another book on Vietnam, *Washington Plans an Aggressive War* (1971).



That same year, Marc received from a source (later identified as the whistle-blower Daniel Ellsberg) "a mountain of paper, some 2,000 to 5,000 pages," that became known as the Pentagon Papers. Playing his customary catalytic role, he put Ellsberg in touch with *New York Times* reporter Neil Sheehan, who drew heavily on the material for his series on the United States' secret early involvement in Vietnam. A longtime passionate proponent of nuclear disarmament, Marc would also serve in the 1980s as chair of the SANE/Freeze campaign.

Marc's many articles for *The Nation* formed the corpus of his intellectual legacy. For example, despite his passion for nuclear-arms control, he displayed his pragmatism

(continued on page 8)



THE SCORE/BRYCE COVERT + MIKE KONCZAL

Gaming the Tax Code

There are many reasons that the GOP tax overhaul will be unpopular. It increases the national debt by more than $1 trillion, while still raising taxes on millions of people. For most individuals who will see cuts, the benefits are small and temporary, while the savings for corporations are expansive and permanent. Yet what will infuriate people the most is the staggering unfairness of the bill's many loopholes.

The revamped tax code will create a vast and easy game for accountants to play. The newest hide-the-money strategy will be to create a so-called pass-through business—a company whose income is passed through to the owner as profit. As the Brookings Institution's Adam Looney notes, "People doing the same exact job for the same exact pay [will end up] paying 30 to 40 percent more in taxes if they're paid in wages rather than profits." As a result, many will rush to claim their income as profit from their own business. And because this benefit increases the more income you make, professionals in finance, medicine, law, and other elite jobs will go to the furthest lengths to do this. Kansans were livid when University of Kansas basketball coach Bill Self, the state's highest-paid employee, formed a company to avoid paying state taxes on almost his entire salary. That Republican tax plan will now extend that to the whole country.

What will infuriate people the most is the staggering unfairness of the bill's many loopholes.

Won't the federal government attempt to stop these abuses? There are three reasons that it won't. The first major problem is that there's no clear principle on who should be able to take advantage of these loopholes. Law professor Daniel Shaviro has argued that the law is so unreasoned and haphazard, so filled with random exemptions and carve-outs, that it will be nearly impossible for a regulator to determine who's taking advantage of the tax code in ways contrary to legislative intent. Normally there would be a clear, detailed economic argument hashed out with expert advice for how to draw these lines, but that's precisely what was missing from the tax debate. Shaviro writes that the economic theory underlying the tax law is "incoherent or nonexistent."

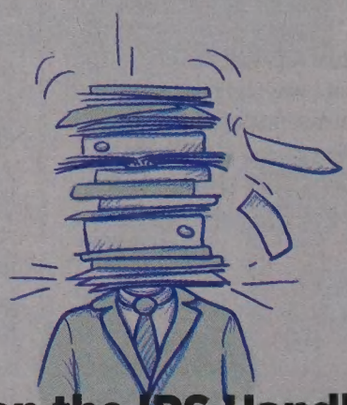
The second problem is that the IRS has been defunded and drained of personnel for years. It also has very little time to fix any of these problems, and will be working at a breakneck pace to try and provide guidance for these new rules. At the same time, the IRS's enforcement division has been disproportionately hit by funding and staffing reductions. Since 2010, the IRS has lost nearly a quarter of its enforcement staff. An underfunded IRS won't just be ineffective; it will undermine the public's trust that tax laws will be fairly enforced.

But even with enough resources and time, the people Trump will likely appoint to head the IRS are unlikely to rigorously enforce these regulations anyway. The new interim head of the IRS, David Kautter, oversaw a team at the consulting firm Ernst & Young known as Viper, designed to help the rich hide their wealth from US taxation. It is possible that Kautter could use his knowledge to fight and close loopholes; but given every single other aspect of the Trump administration, this seems highly improbable.

The third major problem, as has been pointed out by *The Wall Street Journal*'s Richard Rubin, is that these loopholes will allow Republicans to manipulate the statistics and claim that their tax bill worked. Think through the consequences of someone replacing their normal job with a pass-through business that pays lower taxes: Less money is collected overall, but income normally collected from wages now counts as corporate income. No new activity takes place, and government revenue falls. Yet statistics will show that corporate income and taxes from corporations will have increased as a result of cutting corporate taxes, an outcome that Republicans will point to as the bill having "worked."

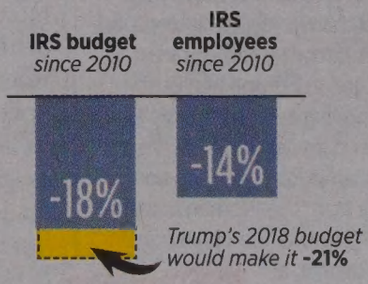
People find the runaway incomes at the very top to be unfair. But what people hate even more is the idea of someone getting away with something. Unfortunately for us all, this tax code will only lead to more of both types of injustice.

MIKE KONCZAL



Can the IRS Handle Tax Reform?

The IRS now faces the daunting task of providing and policing a new tax code. **But Republicans have gutted the agency.**



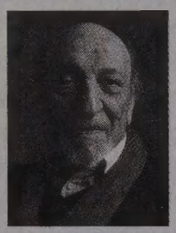
More than **50%** of current "pass-through" business income goes to the top 1%. **Who will catch the cheaters hiding even more of their income?**

Sources: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; Tax Policy Center
2018 Infographic: Tracy Matsue Loeffelholz

PROTEST ART

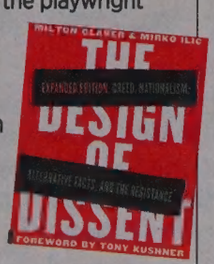
Resistance by Design

Milton Glaser, the legendary graphic designer behind the "I ♥ NY" logo, has turned his attention to a subject he hates: the presidency of Donald Trump.



In December, Glaser debuted a series of three posters in the New York City subway system that seeks to counter Trump's divisive rhetoric. Glaser produced the posters for "Underground Images," a campaign by the School of Visual Arts that has graced the city's subway stations for the past 50 years. One poster announces "To Dream Is Human," a reference to the undocumented immigrants known as "Dreamers," whose future is currently in the hands of Congress.

Glaser has also responded to the Trump era with a reissue of his 2005 book *The Design of Dissent*, co-edited with Mirko Ilić, which assembles several decades' worth of dissident artwork from around the world. Old posters and stickers decrying authoritarian repression in Europe and Bush-era imperialism in the Middle East are now complemented by installations lampooning Trump and posters from the Women's March. In the foreword, the playwright Tony Kushner, a *Nation* editorial-board member, argues that such art often has its roots in advertising or in the very propaganda that it seeks to defy. But this, Kushner writes, should give us reason to hope: "Every phenomenon...including the language of oppression, carries within itself the seeds of its own unraveling."



—Jake Bittle

Eric Alterman

The End of Truth

Lying presidents aren't new, but Trump's mendacity stands apart.

In his final speech to his colleagues, Senator Al Franken expressed his concern "that it feels like we're losing the war for truth. And maybe it's already lost." The measure of our defeat may be seen in the fact that we have a president who, according to *The Washington Post*'s lowball estimate, tells an average of 5.6 falsehoods per day.

Lying presidents are nothing new. I coined the term "post-truth presidency" back in October 2004 to refer to the George W. Bush administration. What's novel about Donald Trump, however, is that he does not lie in pursuit of some larger political goal or to hide a potentially damaging secret. He just likes to lie, often for no discernible reason. But while Trump is a moron in most respects, he is an instinctive genius at media manipulation. And here, his apparently purposeless mendacity achieves two significant goals: First, he overwhelms traditional journalism, which cannot keep up and does not even wish to try. Second, his shamelessness inspires others to revise and expand his lies until they become "true," at least in the right-wing universe of cable-news-driven political discussion.

A textbook example of the first phenomenon can be found in the recent impromptu presidential interview granted to *The New York Times*' Michael Schmidt at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, where the reporter—crouched, literally and symbolically, in a "catcher's squat"—invited Trump to lie to him without interruption. If you think I exaggerate, here are Schmidt's own words: "Some readers criticized my approach, saying I should have asked more follow-up questions. I believed it was more important to continue to allow the president to speak and let people make their own judgments about his statements."

Thus was Trump given the *Times* megaphone to say whatever he wished, regardless of whether it had any basis in reality. The following day, the *Times* found 10 occasions in which the president uttered falsehoods in those 30 minutes—a decidedly conservative estimate compared with *The Washington Post*'s tally of 24 and the *Toronto Star*'s 25 (with only some overlap), which comes out to just under one per minute. What's more, Schmidt's (and the *Times*') idea of letting readers "make their own judgments about his statements" is a fundamental abdication of the journalist's purpose and profession. How can the average citizen be expected to know that Trump "exaggerated the trade deficit with other countries," as the *Times* later pointed out? Do people walk around with accurate estimates of individual US trade deficits in their heads? Needless to say, a next-day article questioning a few of the president's falsehoods does not undo the damage done by acting as a stenographer for Trump's lies.

And lest you think the *Times* might reconsider this policy because we have a lunatic in the Oval Office, take a look at White House correspondent Maggie Haberman's response on Twitter to criticism of the interview: "Hslf [*sic*] of Twitter thinks the Schmidt interview was revealing about the POTUS because it was his unfiltered thoughts. The other half is angry that @nytmike did not audition as an extra for the courtroom remake of 'A Few Good Men' and interrupt him constantly." In other words: "Shut up, everyone. We're the *Times*."

The bad news is that the media universe intentionally disseminating pro-Trump lies is about to expand exponentially. Sinclair Broadcast Group was recently fined $13 million by the Federal Communications Commission for failing to identify sponsored programming—or, to put it another way, lying to viewers for money. But the company's corruption isn't only financial; it is also political. Sinclair forces its stations to run right-wing commentary on local newscasts, and during the election it cut a deal with Jared Kushner to give Trump favorable coverage in exchange for access to his campaign. Sinclair's proposed $3.9 billion takeover of Tronc (formerly the Tribune Company) would mean that it will be able to lie to viewers of 233 broadcast stations covering 72 percent of the United States.

While Trump is a moron in most respects, he is an instinctive genius at media manipulation.

Meanwhile, Rupert Murdoch is selling the entertainment portion of his empire to Disney for $52.4 billion. (Yes, that's a B.) At the moment,

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How To: Fix Your Fatigue and Get More Energy

Founder and Director **Dr. Steven Gundry** is a world-renowned heart surgeon, a best-selling author, and the personal physician to many celebrities. But his breakthrough could be the most important accomplishment of his career.

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"When you're feeling low energy, that's your body screaming **HELP!**" Dr. Gundry's radical solution was inspired by a breakthrough with a "hopeless" patient who had been massively overweight, chronically fatigued and suffering from severely clogged arteries.

The secret to his breakthrough? **"There are key 'micronutrients' missing from your diet,"** Dr. Gundry said, "If you can replenish them in very high dosages, the results can be astonishing."

Users of this new method is what led Dr. Gundry to create an at-home method for fatigue.

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Dr. Gundry's team released a **comprehensive video presentation**, so that the public can be educated as to exactly how it works.

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Within just a few hours, this video had gotten thousands of hits, and is now considered to have gone viral. One v iewer commented: "If this works, it's exactly what I've been praying for my whole life. I've never seen anything like it before…the truth about my diet was shocking and eye-opening."

It makes a lot of sense, and it sounds great in theory, but we'll have to wait and see what the results are. Knowing Dr. Gundry, however, there is a great deal of potential.

See his presentation here at **www.GetEnergy17.com**

LIFE'S A GAS

Pumping Up the Economy

Since the new year, Americans—or at least those who work in the media—have been ridiculing the denizens of Oregon for being unable or unwilling to pump their own gas. For more than 65 years, the state had barred customers from filling their own cars' fuel tanks at gas stations, but a law that went into effect on January 1 loosened the prohibition in some counties with fewer than 40,000 people. (New Jersey is now the only state where it's always illegal to refill your own automobile.) The Oregon legislation won't affect many people, but content-hungry news sites plucked a few Facebook comments out of context and invented a full-blown self-serve-gas panic. The website *Jalopnik*, in a typical example, titled its article "Join America In Laughing At Oregonians Freaking Out About Pumping Their Own Gas."

But the online fuss ignores the value of outlawing self-service stations. In Oregon, the ban creates about 10,000 jobs, which usually pay more than minimum wage. The cost to drivers is nominal—Oregon tends to have cheaper gas than other West Coast states. And the law can make filling up easier for disabled drivers who have trouble manipulating the gas pump.

Erik Loomis, a labor historian at the University of Rhode Island, argues that the Internet uproar shows that we "have internalized really awful narratives about work, technological innovation, and society." A full-employment economy, he writes, "may in fact require small sacrifices around the margins...such as you waiting 3 minutes for your gas to be pumped." —Christopher Shay

Murdoch owns only 28 local stations, but guess what? "We will be in the mood to expand and do new things. And we'll have the ability," he said in an investor call. By this, he presumably means the ability to turn countless local news stations into propaganda outlets for our pathological liar in chief, just as he has done with Fox.

The billions Fox brings in is likely the reason that—according to Michael Wolff's *Fire and Fury*—Murdoch has become Trump's hero and lodestar. (This despite the fact Murdoch reportedly considers Trump to be a "fucking idiot.") Wolff also reports that Peter Thiel, the Trump-loving Silicon Valley billionaire and sworn enemy of press freedom, has been looking to start his own network. Inspired by the success of Steve Bannon's *Breitbart*, Thiel was in talks with the late Fox News impresario Roger Ailes to create an even crazier, even more dishonest TV network, and was hoping to rope in Ailes's fellow sexual predator, Bill O'Reilly, and Fox's Trump whisperer, Sean Hannity.

Having lost the support of billionaires Robert and Rebekah Mercer, "Sloppy Steve" is now out at *Breitbart*, but there is no doubt that his old "news" organization, and the rest of the right, will continue to lie on behalf of Trumpism. Recently, *Breitbart*'s top editor, Alex Marlow, admitted that while he personally believed former Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore's victims, he nevertheless sought to discredit them to prevent the creation of "a standard where President Trump...will not be able to match whatever standard is now in place for who can be a United States senator." Marlow has a point. If we allow silly concepts like "truth" to hold sway, how can Trump be expected to live up to the standards of a slavery-supporting alleged child molester? ■

(continued from page 4)

by calling for cooperation between the two main anti-nuke groups, which he called, in a 1982 article here, the "prudentialists" and the "abolitionists."

Marc was one of the first to warn about the national-security state, one of his bêtes noires. As he wrote in these pages, with Gregory D. Squires: "The United States has been at war for more years than it has been at peace. War is not a 'last resort,' something we fall back on when diplomacy, sanctions and other tools fail. It has become our normal condition." He boldly called for the abolition of the warfare state, beginning with its main action arm, the CIA.

Closer to home, he and the late A.W. Singham, who had been a fellow *Nation* editorial-board member, inspired a 1991 *Nation* symposium on the left's need to take a hard look at its own shortcomings amid the collapse of the Soviet Union. "It is time for a wide-ranging dialogue on the left and liberal side of the spectrum," Raskin wrote in a preface to his essay. "Where we have been wrong we must so state. Where we are in need of rethinking, let us rethink, and where we have been right, morally and politically, let us say so forcefully. We are in need of something more than co-optable reforms, something less open to distortion and more life-affirming than revolution. We are in need of reconstruction and institutional transformation." Years earlier, Marc made his own contribution to such a rethinking by drawing up a guide to what a progressive program should be: "Everyone is entitled to work; individual accumulation is secondary to the development of the common heritage and common wealth; citizenship must now extend to the workplace; we must reconsider and transform our defense policies and international purposes so as to achieve a truly secure society at home."

Marc was an activist, heart and soul. In a 1993 piece, he invoked the gap between thought and action: "Are there existential commitments that liberal-minded philosophers are prepared to make that match their ideas with their own political actions? Sartre complained that no professor of ethics he had ever heard of had taken so much as a bop on the head for the wretched."

Marc's most lasting contribution to the cause of American progressivism came in 1963, when he co-founded, with his fellow activist-thinker Barnet, the Institute for Policy Studies, which became the left's leading think tank. That project grew out of Marc's disappointment with the Kennedy administration; both he and Barnet served as staffers on the National Security Council. The two men bonded after John McCloy, dean of the defense establishment, said at a meeting on arms control attended by Pentagon officials and military contractors, "If this group cannot bring about disarmament, no one can." Stunned by the bland absurdity of McCloy's statement, the two dissidents bowed out and went on to create the IPS as a true generator of ideas leading to peace. And they ensured the institute's ability to speak truth to power by refusing to take money from the government or corporations. Today, more than 50 years after its founding by Raskin and Barnet, the IPS continues its thriving, vibrant work with John Cavanagh at the helm, and many of the institute's fellows are valued *Nation* contributors.

Those of us at *The Nation* who worked with Marc personally knew him as a kindly and reasonable man, as well as a brilliant humanistic thinker who harbored a sensitive artistic soul (Marc had been a child prodigy on the piano and studied at New York's Juilliard School at the age of 16). He was a person at ease in his own skin, though not in the world, which he constantly sought to change for the better. As a leader in that unending fight, Marc Raskin will be badly missed by his comrades, who must carry it on without him. ■

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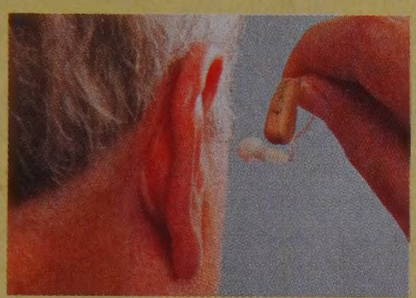

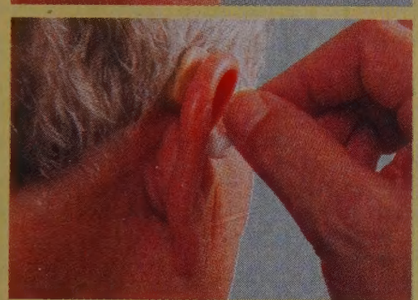

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IMMIGRATION

Motel 6's ICE Machine

Employees at Motel 6 locations in Washington State handed Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers the personal details of thousands of customers in order to help the federal agency arrest undocumented immigrants, according to a lawsuit filed in January by the state attorney general. Some Motel 6 locations would provide their guest lists to ICE on a "near-daily basis"; ICE officials would circle "Latino-sounding names" that the agency would then target, according to a report in *The Washington Post*. In one location, the motel allegedly supplied names to ICE on 228 occasions over a 225-day period.

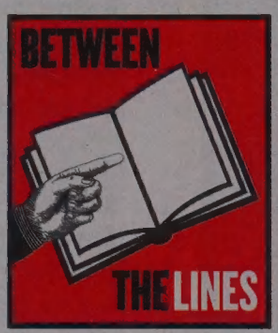
The lawsuit follows an investigation by *Phoenix New Times* last September, which revealed that two Motel 6 locations in Arizona had been alerting ICE to report guests they thought might be undocumented. That article prompted a check for similar occurrences in Washington. According to the attorney general's office, the incidents in Arizona were not isolated: At least six corporate-owned locations in the Evergreen State assisted ICE by furnishing the agency with private personal information. In a statement, Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson said that four of those locations released information on more than 9,000 customers. "Motel 6 implied this was a local problem. We have found that is not true," Ferguson said, referring to a statement released by the company claiming that any cooperation with ICE was "implemented at the local level without the knowledge of senior management." —Miguel Salazar

Laila Lalami

A Reality-Show Presidency

Season one featured meltdowns, fiascoes, and racism. What's next?

Imagine: A real-estate heir with a fake tan and no qualifications invites the viewing public to join him on an unprecedented adventure. He will, he says, drain the swamp in Washington, DC. Over the course of a few short weeks, he selects contestants for his show, prizing style over substance and fealty over independence. Once the work starts, however, he spends much of his time in a gaudy mansion in Florida, where he plays golf, meets with foreign dignitaries, and tweets his angry meltdowns. Contestants are regularly eliminated. He feuds with several nemeses, but the one he hates the most is the one he has known the longest, and the one who nearly stole the spotlight from him. At the end of the first season, he has failed to drain the swamp, but he is making money for himself through tie-ins and merchandising. The second season promises even more twists and turns, with members of his own team questioning his mental capacity, to which his response is that he is "a very stable genius."



What would have once been merely an exercise in the suspension of disbelief is now our national nightmare. This president appears to have neither the interest nor the ability to govern. He is said to favor pictures and charts over long blocks of text, and White House staff have had to adapt their briefings accordingly. Rather than pore over reports and analyses from his intelligence agencies, he watches pundits on Fox News, then tweets his thoughts. Decisions are made on the fly, and then sometimes unmade or revised in an effort to help him save face. He lies almost constantly, even about matters of no importance, and his lies travel around the world before corrections can be made. He refers to the media as "the enemy of the American people" and bullies or insults anyone who doesn't fall in line with him. Yesterday's friends become enemies, as Steve Bannon, his former chief strategist, found out recently when the president dismissed him as "Sloppy Steve." His views about race are perhaps best summarized by the fact that David Duke and members of the Ku Klux Klan have embraced him.

So where do we stand after a year? Donald Trump's 12 months in office have been short on achievement and long on frustration. Although his party controls both the House and the Senate, he couldn't repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, couldn't make Mexico pay for the border wall, couldn't prove that "millions" had voted illegally in the last presidential election, couldn't defund Planned Parenthood, and, perhaps most frustrating of all for him, couldn't stop the federal investigation into his campaign's ties to Russian government agents.

And yet the president has managed to wreak a lot of damage in a short amount of time. The Muslim ban, which he signed a week after taking office, was famously and memorably blocked by federal courts, but by September of last year it had been modified to include two non-Muslim countries, Venezuela and North Korea. With this sleight of hand (North Korea already bans most of its nationals from leaving, and the restrictions on Venezuelans only apply to government officials and their families), the ban on Muslims from Iran, Syria, Libya, Chad, Somalia, and Yemen was allowed to proceed. Unless challenges in the federal appeals courts succeed, and unless the Supreme Court eventually rules against it, this immoral policy is now the law of the land.

Republicans have not only been remarkably silent about Trump's behavior this past year; they have actively enabled it.

Animus against Muslims is just one pillar of Trump's promise to "Make America great again"; the other is xenophobia. After he became president, he ordered Immigration and Customs Enforcement to speed up deportations of undocumented immigrants, including those who have been in the country for decades and have not committed serious crimes. But he has made it clear that he's opposed to legal migration from certain countries as well: *The New York Times* recently reported that Trump has complained to his staff that immigrants from Haiti "all have AIDS" and that those from Nigeria would never "go back to their huts." He has also thrown his support behind the so-called Raise Act, a bill introduced by Sena-

LEFT: AP PHOTO / ELAINE THOMPSON; ILLUSTRATION: ANDY FRIEDMAN

tors Tom Cotton and David Perdue that would cut legal immigration by 50 percent and significantly favor people from English-speaking countries. And let's not forget that his administration's response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico has been dismal: Four months after the disaster, nearly half of the island's people are still without power.

Trump's rhetoric has had a significant effect on the culture. The Dreamers are living in limbo, while the fascist right, now emboldened, seeks to expand the window of acceptable discourse, both on and off college campuses. The country looks more divided than at any time in recent memory. How bleak the future seems when, on the second day of the new year, the president tweets, "I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!"

Not only have Republicans been remarkably silent about Trump's behavior this past year; they have enabled it. They confirmed his appointments, dismissed his critics, and smiled through photo ops with him. The reason for their silence and acquiescence is clear: "He'll sign anything we put in front of him," says Mitch McConnell in Michael Wolff's *Fire and Fury*. In order to get the tax cuts that will significantly benefit them and their corporate friends, the Republicans have been willing to endanger the entire country.

We now enter the second year of the reality-show presidency. Each morning, we wake up with the familiar dread of what the president might do next. Nuclear war is no longer a remote possibility; it is the potential outcome of an angry outburst. But despair is not an option. It's time to be daring, to demand better of our representatives and to work harder—much harder—at holding them to account. And if they don't listen, it's time to put them out of work. How are you preparing for the midterms in November? ■

Donald Trump's 12 months in office have been short on achievement and long on frustration.

OppArt

The Dead Sea

Last year, *The Nation* launched "OppArt," a series of daily artistic dispatches from the front lines of the resistance. To see more, visit TheNation.com/OppArt.

TJEERD ROYAARDS

Calvin Trillin
Deadline Poet

TRUMP AS GENIUS

Another genius has been named.
It's Donald Trump (he's self-proclaimed)—
So smart he can explain, we hope,
Why all his aides call him a dope.

THE DROWNING YEARS

To be Muslim and American in the age of Trump is to live in a state of constant dread.

MOUSTAFA BAYOUMI

IT TOOK A MOMENT FOR THE NEWS TO SINK IN, TO FULLY GRASP WHAT had happened on that fateful Tuesday morning. But once I did, I felt like I was drowning.

How could I not? The magnitude of the event was as overwhelming as a massive ocean wave, and after the initial blow, I knew immediately that we—Muslim Americans—now had to prepare to be swept away by it. We, like the rest of the United States, had been caught completely off guard, and so many people across the country suddenly seemed afraid for the future. But we Muslim Americans knew enough to assume the worst. Our fears were not abstract.

Almost instantly, mosques were vandalized. Muslim parents agonized over their children's safety at school. Violent assaults increased not only in number but also in ferocity. As all of this was occurring, we were working hard to look out for one another, while also trying not to lose sight of what this catastrophe meant for the nation as a whole.

One thing that helped was the genuine concern we heard from our non-Muslim friends, neighbors, and even strangers. "I am the daughter of a Japanese-American who was interned during W.W.II," read one e-mail I received from an electronic mailing list I'm on. "I have heard that Muslims are fearful to leave their homes etc., and with good reason. Is there a way that I can help? I live in Brooklyn. I have a car. I would be happy to accompany Muslim women to stores and public places, run errands, help with a media campaign. I don't know what to do, but I am willing to help."

Life became instantly more difficult for us after that Tuesday, but this offer of help just two days later—and a thousand more like it—were each a small burst of fresh air, helping us to get some oxygen into our lungs so that we wouldn't drown.

The e-mail from this woman landed in my inbox on Thursday, September 13, 2001.

Trump doesn't seek to monopolize the violence against vulnerable minorities; he aims to direct its many actors.

SIXTEEN YEARS AGO, I HAD A SUDDEN TIGHT SENSATION IN my chest while absorbing all the horrific news of the day. Now the feeling is back. At no other point since the months following the September 11 attacks have I felt as worried about my life as a Muslim in this country as I have since the rise of Donald Trump, from the beginnings of his campaign for president in 2015 all the way through his first year in office. That's a long stretch to feel like it's hard to breathe, but since Trump is known to have shifted money from his charitable foundation into his own pockets, why wouldn't he steal my oxygen, too?

A lot of Trump's politics runs on his own anti-Muslim guano. In 2015 alone, he endorsed the idea of registering Muslims in a national database, said he would "strongly consider" closing down mosques in the United States, and campaigned on barring all Syrian refugees. He promoted the batshit theory that a quarter of US Muslims believe that violence against Americans "is justified as a part of the global jihad." (In fact, Muslim Americans reject violence against civilians at a substantially higher rate than the general US public, according to the Pew Research Center.) And he called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on."

Trump's defenders insisted that this was all just "campaign-trail rhetoric," as if exploiting bigotry were any different from bigotry itself. But by the end of 2015, hate crimes against Muslims in the United States had rocketed to what was then their highest point since 2001. Brian Levin, director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at the University of California, San Bernardino, told *The New York Times* that the anti-Muslim violence in this period seemed to escalate immediately following Trump's flamethrowing comments.

And the situation did not ease after 2015; instead, it got substantially worse. In 2016, hate crimes rose again, according to FBI data, this time by almost 20 percent com-

ILLUSTRATION BY **EDEL RODRIGUEZ**

LEADING THE RESISTANCE

Colin Kaepernick

Courage is contagious.

DAVE ZIRIN

People say that this moment of athletic activism started with Colin Kaepernick taking that knee during the national anthem. But as Kaepernick would be the first to acknowledge, it didn't begin with a knee; it started with the Black Lives Matter movement and the pressing need to stand up to racism and police violence.

Just as, today, you can't talk about the civil-rights movement of the 1950s without talking about Jackie Robinson, or of the 1960s without talking about Muhammad Ali, or of the women's-liberation movement without talking about Billie Jean King, in future years you won't be able to talk about this new millennial resistance to racism without talking about Colin Kaepernick.

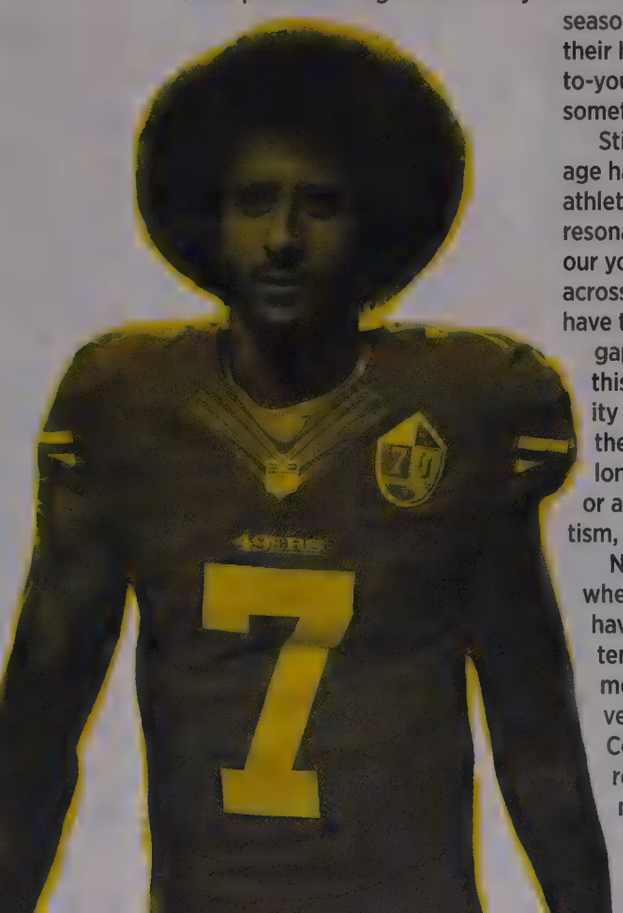
We should also remember that it's not just what Kaepernick did; it's what he said. When asked why he didn't stand for the anthem, Kaepernick replied, "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder."

As the fiery Hotspur puts it in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*: "tell truth, and shame the devil!" Kaepernick told the truth, but the devil doesn't like to be shamed, and the backlash against him has been ferocious. He's been showered with abuse by some of the most dangerous sewer-dwellers in America. And, of course, the NFL's owners—who showered our white-supremacist president with millions of dollars—have collectively denied Kaepernick a living. Their intent, it is obvious now, was to turn him into a ghost story, a warning to other players: Don't be like Colin or you'll pay the ultimate price.

But instead of becoming a ghost story, Kaepernick has become an icon of resistance, and we have all seen this sports season how athletes have used their hyper-exalted, brought-to-you-by-Nike platform to say something about the world.

Still, while much of the coverage has been about professional athletes speaking out, the true resonance has been felt among our youth. High-school athletes across the US, in different sports, have taken a knee to protest the gap between the promises of this country and the lived reality of racism. This has turned the athletic field, which for so long has been either apolitical or a place of uncritical patriotism, into a site of visible dissent.

Now we live in a world where sports, of all things, have given us an arena of tenacious resistance—and, most importantly, hope in very difficult times. What Colin Kaepernick has done is retaught an old lesson to a new generation: that courage is contagious.



pared with the previous year. In particular, the number of violent assaults against Muslim Americans surpassed even the number from 2001, the year when the previous high had been recorded. The Trump effect was being felt, and painfully so.

Since his election, Trump hasn't relented in stoking anti-Muslim feelings. He has doubled down on his double standard of demonizing Muslim extremists but not white extremists. He has remained silent on Muslim victims of hatred. He has retweeted three incredibly incendiary anti-Muslim videos from the extreme right-wing fringe group Britain First, solidifying his credentials not as a global statesman and the leader of the most powerful nation on earth, but as the chief propagandist for the international anti-Muslim movement. (Strange behavior for someone who insults internationalism at every chance.)

Most important, he has shown that his Muslim ban was far from mere campaign rhetoric. After three different iterations, the latest version of the ban, now in effect, seems poised to pull the United States all the way back to the late 19th century, when the targeted exclusion of a whole class of immigrants—in those days, the Chinese—became the law of the land.

Little wonder that 2017 is on track to become another record-breaking year for anti-Muslim hate crimes.

The ease with which Trump, as president, trots out his anti-Muslim bigotry has Muslim Americans feeling more on edge than ever. This may be unsurprising, since his statements seem to have a direct impact on our physical welfare, but Trump's outrageous behavior also tends to make us forget just how sad and ordinary much of his Islamophobia really is.

Policy-wise, Trump is no evil genius concocting innovative new ways to torment us. A registry for Muslims was something that the Bush administration rolled out in limited fashion, starting in 2002, to little public outcry but disastrous effect—especially to the many immigrant families whose fathers or brothers were deported because of the program. Trump's demands for a total and complete shutdown of Muslim immigration is not leagues away from an initiative of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, carried out during the Obama years, that delayed or denied citizenship to tens of thousands of people from Muslim-majority countries. (The ACLU is currently litigating that program.) Meanwhile, Trump's calls for spying on or shutting down mosques seem pretty similar to the mass sweeps and surveillance programs run by the FBI and other law-enforcement agencies under both Bush and Obama.

Considering this short history, it may be tempting to believe that Trump's big new play is, basically, to speak out loud an Islamophobia that has already been put into practice. But to think so misses a vital point.

The fundamental difference between Trump and his predecessors is that Trump sanctions—encourages, really—the mistreatment of Muslims by uniting the power of the executive branch with the violence of the far right. (This strategy is not limited to Muslims, of course.) Even George W. Bush didn't countenance such

a strategy. Six days after the 2001 attacks, Bush visited a mosque in Washington, DC, not to further the interests of global peace—he was already preparing for war—but to stem the rapidly rising vigilante violence against Muslims and those mistaken to be Muslim happening around the country at the time. Bush's mosque visit was necessary as a way to garner global support for an imminent conflict abroad while reminding Americans of the state's monopoly on violence—including against Muslims—at home.

With Trump, it's different. The very idea of Trump visiting a mosque seems ludicrous. Why? Because unlike his immediate predecessors, Trump is best understood not as a regular politician but as a fundamentally sectarian demagogue. And like sectarian demagogues everywhere, he aspires not to unity but to division. Trump doesn't seek to monopolize the violence against vulnerable minorities; he aims to direct its many actors. True to his sectarian impulses, he pursues the state's tools of violence for himself while also craving the ability to mobilize his own militia if needed. His is a chauvinism that masquerades as patriotism.

And now this chauvinism seems to be seeping beyond the White House into the other branches of government. The Supreme Court's latest ruling on the Muslim ban suggests that Trump may have successfully co-opted the legal rationalism of the judiciary as well, thereby unifying the power of the executive branch, the violence of the far right, and the legitimacy of the judicial branch in the service of the Trump agenda. This development is more than menacing—it's petrifying.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THIS ALARMING TURN OF affairs has also been deeply disturbing to many Americans of all stripes. Trump's election and subsequent attempt to roll out his first travel ban in January 2017 was, I suspect, eye-opening to people who never suspected their country would act in such a manner, at least not in their lifetime. And that shock led to some of the most inspiring collective action this country has seen in years. The rapid demonstrations around the nation's airports to oppose the Muslim ban were deeply moving and completely unforgettable.

The looming problem is that our oppositional energies are easily exhausted by the relentlessness of Trump and by the deepening institutionalization of the War on Terror. As the second year of Trump's presidency begins, we can't let our energies dissipate. Like the Japanese-American woman from Brooklyn who offered her help to Muslim strangers in 2001, we need to show the level of concern for one another that the times demand. We need to organize our energies to secure a more just and humane future. And we need to do so with a mass surge of people beside us.

We also can't wait for the FBI, the Mueller investigation, the Democratic Party, or anyone else to save us. The task is ours, and ours alone. The stakes are as high as you suspect, and we may not have much time left before the right-wing tide overtakes us, and we all drown. ■

Moustafa Bayoumi, a professor at Brooklyn College, is the author of How Does It Feel to Be a Problem? *(Penguin) and* This Muslim American Life *(NYU Press).*

LEADING THE RESISTANCE

ADAPT

"Dying in" to save lives.

ZOË CARPENTER

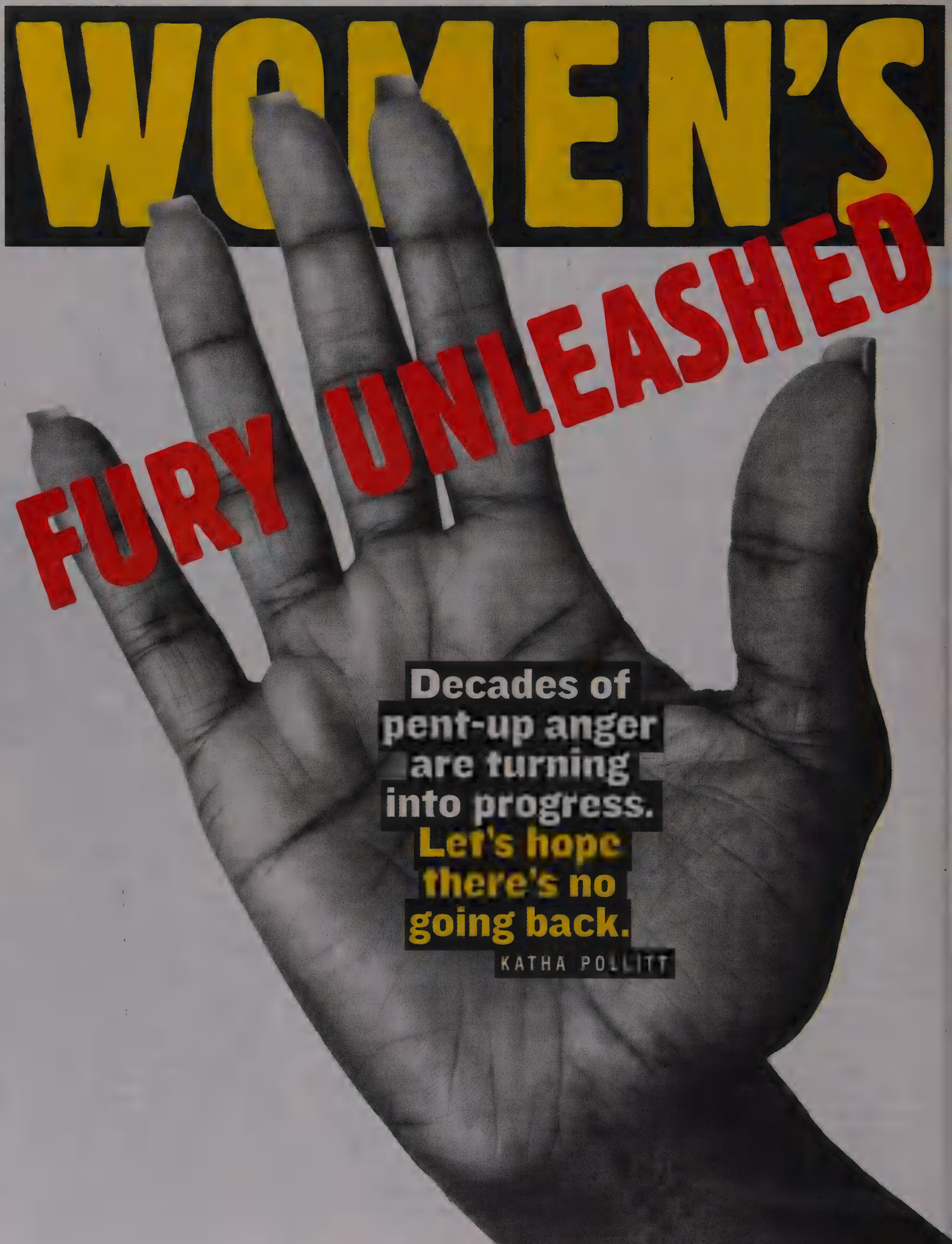
One morning last June, as Senate Republicans worked feverishly to gut the Affordable Care Act, about 60 people, many of them in wheelchairs, entered the Russell Senate Office Building by separate doors so as not to attract attention from the Capitol Police. They converged on the office of Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell and proceeded to raise hell. "No cuts to Medicaid! Save our liberty!" the protesters chanted; some got out of their wheelchairs and lay down on the floor. The day's news reports were filled with shocking pictures of police officers carrying away disabled activists, some of them handcuffed with zip ties.

Organized by the disability-rights group ADAPT, the "die-in" at McConnell's office, as well as dozens of similar actions throughout the spring and summer at congressional offices from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Orlando, Florida, pulled back the curtain on the GOP's plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Deep cuts to Medicaid buried in the legislation would have been particularly devastating to disabled Americans, since the program helps many pay for at-home services, thus keeping them out of institutions. "If we lose our health care, people with disabilities in particular will begin to die, because we won't have access to doctors and to the services and supports that keep us alive and independent," explained Anita Cameron, a 31-year ADAPT veteran and one of the 43 people arrested at McConnell's office.

ADAPT's history of activism reaches back to the 1970s and is rooted in the community's efforts to escape nursing homes and live freely in the wider world. Using confrontational, nonviolent tactics inspired by the civil-rights movement, the group focused initially on access to public transit. In the summer of 1978, disability activists in Denver surrounded and "seized" two city buses—few of which had wheelchair lifts at the time—during the morning rush hour, then slept on the pavement overnight, preventing the buses from moving for two days. Other early actions included smashing up curbs with sledgehammers in an effort to secure ramps at crosswalks, as well as a demonstration in Washington, DC, where activists abandoned their wheelchairs to crawl up the Capitol steps. That action led to one of the group's major victories: the Americans With Disabilities Act, enacted in 1990.

"We have been written off politically as a group of folks who can't get anything done and aren't really important to the political discourse," said longtime organizer Bruce Darling, who worked out the logistics for the takeover of McConnell's office. ADAPT's role in turning the tide of public opinion decisively against the GOP's plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act last year should dispel that notion. And you can count on ADAPT to be ready the next time legislators take aim at health care. "We are certainly prepared to fight for as long as it takes, and I don't see this ending anytime soon," promised Cameron, who by her own count has been arrested more than 130 times. "When they say 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'—we want that."

WOMEN'S FURY UNLEASHED



Decades of pent-up anger are turning into progress. Let's hope there's no going back.

KATHA POLLITT

FEMINISM IS BACK, WITH A VENGEANCE, AND YOU CAN THANK Donald Trump for that. No, seriously. The pussy-grabbing scam artist, ignoramus, and vulgarian with zero government experience, who ran on "Lock her up!" and gold-plated racism, won the White House against a former US senator and secretary of state, a woman with many progressive and pro-woman positions who also happened to be sane and the most qualified candidate in living memory—and, adding insult to injury, who got more votes! It was the loudest wake-up call since alarm clocks were invented. Even plenty of women who didn't like Hillary Clinton could see the problem with a "Hillary Sucks but Not Like Monica" T-shirt. The Trump campaign was like overhearing your co-workers and finding out that, while they might be polite to your face, they all agreed you were an incompetent moron who was sleeping with the boss—oh, and by the way, there's blood coming out of your wherever.

Women have worked incredibly hard to come as far as they have. For the last 36 years, we've gotten more bachelor's degrees than men. We've pushed our way—sometimes even litigated our way—into male-dominated jobs, from auto manufacturing and policing to the military and Congress. In 2017, for the first time, the majority of students entering medical school were female. Despite statistics showing stalled careers, unequal pay, male violence, and the persistence of the double day, we invested in hope. Think how much better our lives are than our mothers' and grandmothers', we told ourselves. Our daughters' lives will be better still. It's as though women's liberation were a kind of conveyor belt, humming along automatically. There was no need, really, to get all angry and hostile and man-hating, or to use antiquated terms like "women's liberation," with all it implied about the sweeping nature of our subjection and the wild collective energy needed to escape it.

That's over. The Women's March set the tone for the resistance on the first full day of the Trump regime—by some measures the largest march in American history, from Washington, DC, and other major cities to small towns in the deep-red states. Who now remembers the male pundits who claimed that calling it a "Women's March" would discourage men from attending, even though, as they were repeatedly reminded, men were officially invited? (I saw many there.) The name was the point: We're running this show. This is about our issues—*all* of them. You be the auxiliaries, for a change. Women set the tone for the year—none of this "Let's wait and see what Trump does, maybe he's not so bad, and anyway, infrastructure!" Women continued to do the lioness's share of political activism as the year went on: showing up at town halls, sending those postcards, making those phone calls, hosting those Huddles (the local meetings that came out of the march), and doing all that grassroots organizing. According to the app Daily Action, 86 percent of active callers to Congress were women—particularly middle-aged women, the most overlooked people in Punditland. Good old Mom, so boring, so ordinary, so unphotogenic! A lot of them were big Hillary supporters, and I'm still waiting for the major-media coverage of how they feel and what they think. ("Tune in tonight, when we go to Teaneck, New Jersey, to check in with Debbie Levine and her book club—one year later, how are they coping?") But I suppose that won't happen as long as there are small-town diners full of angry white men in MAGA hats.

The Women's March set the tone for the resistance on day one. Women did the lioness's share of activism as the year went on.

Now life's coming at us fast. Some people scoffed at the resistance when Jon Ossoff lost in Georgia—but his campaign showed how much pent-up rage and energy there was among Democratic women. I know people who virtually moved to Georgia to go door-to-door. As my colleague Joan Walsh has written, local women who were previously apolitical, or who were Democrats but avoided discussing politics in order to keep the peace among friends and neighbors, became activists overnight. It turned out their PTA-honed networking skills were invaluable. Women were crucial in subsequent Democratic wins, including Ralph Northam's for governor of Virginia and Phil Murphy's for governor of New Jersey. Virginia voters nearly did the unthinkable, turning a 66–34 Republican majority in the state House of Delegates to a slim 51–49 lead. (It would have been a 50–50 stalemate had a tie-breaking draw in one district gone the other way). In the process, they elected a historic number of women, up from 17 to 28.

Women aren't just voting in huge numbers; they are running for office, too. Five hundred women have declared their candidacy for congressional or gubernatorial seats in 2018. And just as the holidays brought 2017 to a merciful close, Doug Jones secured an astonishing victory over accused sexual predator Roy Moore in Alabama. Mothers don't look kindly on molesters of teenage girls—who knew?

But electoral politics isn't the whole story. #MeToo also has its roots in the post-Trump awakening. After all, there have been plenty of male celebrities credibly accused of multiple sexual aggressions—Bill Cosby comes to mind—who did not spark a mass movement of women speaking out about their own experiences of sexual harassment and molestation. Now, all of a sudden, it's zero-tolerance time: Famous and powerful men, from Harvey Weinstein and Charlie Rose to Mario Batali and Garrison Keillor, are going down at a headlong pace. You wake up and wonder who will be all over the news today. It's like the French Revolution, without the guillotine. And along the way, we're finally getting a glimpse of what was always going on behind the scenes: Who knew so many men enjoyed waving their penises at female subordinates? According to a Unite Here survey, 49 percent of hotel maids in Chicago have opened a room door to be greeted by a naked man, or have seen guests otherwise expose themselves.

#MeToo helps answer the question of why women haven't made more progress in the workplace in the 40-odd years since feminism's second wave succeeded in

The resistance begins: The Women's March, which took place on the first full day of Trump's presidency, was by some measures the largest march in US history.

Zephyr Teachout

Nevertheless, she persisted.

D.D. GUTTENPLAN

Zephyr Teachout doesn't quit. I sat down with her for a chat on what was probably the worst day of her political life—November 8, 2016. She was about to lose a race in New York's 19th Congressional District against John Faso, a former lobbyist. She'd run a good campaign in a part of the state where she'd polled well ahead of Andrew Cuomo in 2014. But having billionaires Paul Singer and Robert Mercer donate over $1 million to her opponent's PAC didn't help. Though the numbers weren't encouraging, she kept up a feverish pace of speaking until the polls closed, confident that whatever happened in her own race, Hillary Clinton was about to make history. By the time Teachout gave her own concession speech, even that was looking shaky.

An early supporter of Bernie Sanders who literally wrote the book on political corruption, Teachout recognized Donald Trump's victory as the disaster it was. But far from retreating into self-pity or recrimination, within a few days she was back in the fight, writing in *The Washington Post* that in the 1990s "Democrats pretended they could fund their campaigns with cash from Wall Street titans and still remain the party of the American worker." That clearly didn't work. So what should Democrats stand for? "In a word, democracy," which she said meant "becoming the party that resists every effort by small groups of well-organized wealthy men to take over our families and our communities and our nation."

Teachout has been at it ever since, as lead plaintiff in the lawsuit accusing Trump of violating the Constitution's emoluments clause, meant to prevent federal officials from accepting gifts from foreign governments. In the press, she's explained why the founding fathers worried such corruption would be the death of the Republic. Though the suit has dropped off the media radar, it's still very much alive in the courts. If allowed to proceed, Teachout says, it could eventually lead to "discovery of [Trump's] tax returns so we can figure out the full scope of the payments."

She's also been a critic of the way Google used its muscle as a funder of the New America Foundation to try to silence the anti-monopoly voice of its own Open Markets program. And she even found time to make a nifty video explaining why New York isn't really a blue state. Most recently, she's been a leader in the fight to prevent the Federal Communications Commission from abandoning net neutrality—a term coined by her 2014 running mate, Tim Wu—tweeting a call for protesters to "take to the streets!!!"

Teachout calls herself a "Brandeisian"—a fan of the late Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis, known for his opposition to corporate power and his robust defense of free speech—and her own politics reflect an equally profound skepticism toward both economic oligarchy and an overly intrusive state bureaucracy. She says, "I believe that it is politically incredibly important to tell people the truth about power in society." Which is that, if we don't want to be "little serfs coming to beg to work" in "a global regime run by big corporations," we have to organize and fight.

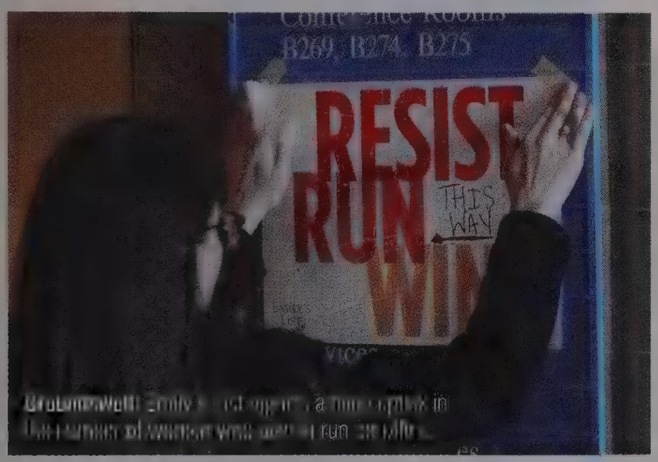
abolishing most formal barriers to gender equality on the job. Maybe, we're learning, it's basically because too many men—#NotAllMen, to be sure—don't want them there, except as underlings and sex objects. We talk all the time about the men who are losing their careers (though I still think the most profitable and well-connected will return after a much-publicized stint in therapy), but the subject remains haunted by the women who never got to have theirs, the brilliant women who were driven out of careers they'd worked for years to enter, or who found themselves mysteriously sidelined, little by little, and have ended up, at age 50, eking out a freelance living while the men they started out with are running the world. When it comes to educated women's stagnation at work, the underlying story line has always been that women are the problem: They're either doing their careers wrong and need to negotiate/dress/network better; or they don't have the right stuff for success, whether it's as scientists or chefs or game designers or senators; or they do have the right stuff—girls can do anything, as Barbie says—but opt to stay at home with their kids and raise chickens in the backyard, because capitalism sucks. Now it turns out that those women may have never had a real chance. They never enjoyed the same opportunities that the men had at work; or they were worn to a frazzle trying to deal with the small daily humiliations of working for a handsy manipulator like Leon Wieseltier; or they were quietly blackballed in their industry if they made a fuss about it; or they came to doubt their abilities because they were constantly being undermined, both professionally and psychologically.

Meanwhile, their male co-workers—who didn't have to deal with any of this—sailed on. Louis CK didn't force them to watch him masturbate as the price of mentorship. Mark Halperin didn't rub his penis on their shoulders. Matt Lauer didn't summon them to his office and push a secret button to lock the door. That must have been nice. But the corollary is that the men we see around us today, with the big careers and the confidence to match, may have taken spaces that were pre-cleared for them by harassment—which is, legally, let's not forget, a form of sex discrimination.

If one of 2017's lessons is that the rage of women is truly a marvel to behold, another is that it's important not to speak of "women" as if they were all white, educated, middle-class professionals. Black women are the ones making the difference at election time: They went 91 percent for Northam, 94 percent for Murphy, and 98 percent for Jones. Indeed, the failure to reach out early and energetically to the black community was one of the problems with Ossoff's campaign: In a segregated district, neighbor to neighbor and PTA mom to PTA mom have their limits. A party or movement that doesn't acknowledge the centrality of black women is missing everything about this moment.

It's also important not to think of "women" as if they were all feminists—or to assume they would be if only feminists weren't so urban, elitist, irreligious, and bent on killing babies. There are millions of conservative women: rich Republicans whose first priority is lower taxes and less regulation; racists and xenophobes who think people of color are ruining America; conservative Catholics and evangelical Protestants who think that abortion is murder

and women belong under men's thumb (although they wouldn't put it quite like that). According to exit polls, 63 percent of white women supported Roy Moore. It's rather conceited to think that all these women, and maybe their menfolk too, just haven't heard the word from the right humble, neighborly, downhome-speaking woke person yet. Maybe, just like us, they actually believe what they say they do and have complex, self-interested, sometimes tribal reasons for it, just as we do. These are not 19th-century farmers getting their news a month late at the general store; they have access to the same range of information that we do. It's a choice to watch Fox News, to belong to a church that preaches wifely submission, to spread racist memes on Facebook, to scorn global warming as fake news. The amount of political energy it would require to pry Trump's base voters away from their chosen way of life—because that is what we're talking about, a whole way of life embedded in geography, racial resentment, sexism, and Jesus—could be so much better spent revitalizing the Democratic Party by fighting voter disenfranchisement, registering voters, and mobilizing low-income people, especially people of color, who already support our politics but have fallen off the map.



None of this is to deny that 2017 was in many ways a terrible year for women's rights. The Department of Health and Human Services is now a vipers' nest of anti-choice and anti-contraception ideologues, and in October, the Trump administration rescinded the Affordable Care Act's birth-control mandate. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has begun to dismantle Title IX protections for students who claim to have been sexually assaulted. At least 19 abortion clinics closed last year. The Justice Department engaged in a highly publicized fight to prevent an undocumented teenager from getting an abortion. The Office of Management and Budget scrapped a mandate that employers report wages by gender and race to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. While protest grabs the headlines, backlash grinds on.

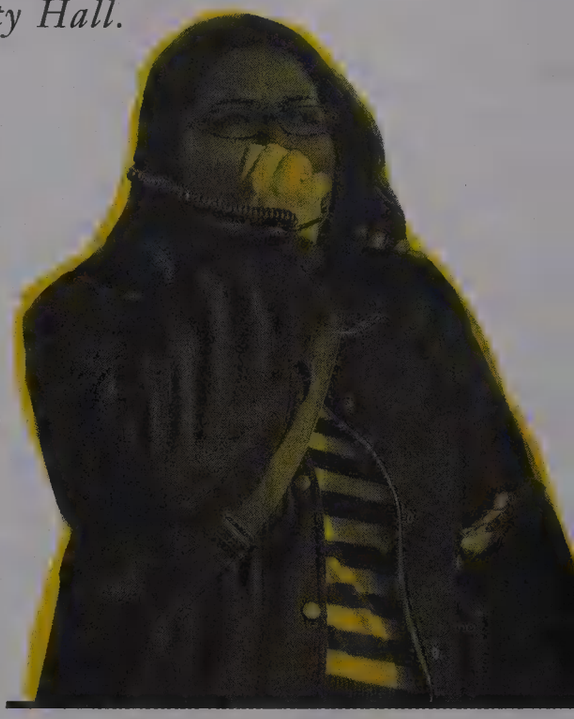
But to end on a positive note, a group of Hollywood actresses, lawyers, and entertainment executives has pledged $13 million to support working-class women in their struggles against sexual harassment. Merriam-Webster picked "feminism" as its 2017 word of the year. 2018 could well see a wave of victories in the midterm elections that would limit Trump's ability to advance his regressive, racist, plutocratic agenda. And if this year turns out to be anything like the last, women will be heading that charge. ■

LEADING THE RESISTANCE

Tania Unzueta

Go fight City Hall.

JULIANNE HING



Trump's election didn't radicalize Tania Unzueta; that came much earlier. In 2001, the then-undocumented teen testified before Congress on behalf of the Dream Act, which would have granted legal status to certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to the country as children and met a strict set of criteria. Today, Unzueta organizes on behalf of all those people who have been excluded from the squeaky-clean Dreamer narrative.

As the legal and policy director for Mijente, a national Latino political hub she helped found in 2015, Unzueta is fighting for immigrants who have been criminalized by the police. And she's doing it in Chicago, where Mayor Rahm Emanuel said earlier this year: "There is no stranger among us. We welcome people." Mijente is taking on Chicago's sanctuary-city and gang-database policies, which, Unzueta argues, criminalize black and brown people, undermine public safety, and contradict Emanuel's own rhetoric.

So Unzueta isn't new to the struggle, but Trump has changed her approach. "Under Obama," she said, "even when we were defending people with criminal records, it was still: 'Stop this person's deportation, because their mistake doesn't make the whole person.' And that doesn't work anymore." The Trump administration isn't moved by appeals to higher humanitarian principles or cowed when critics point out moral hypocrisy. "So if you can't convince someone on those grounds," Unzueta added, "then it's a question of power and leverage."

Unzueta and Mijente now focus more on the local level, where "we can push Democrats in particular who want to go up against Trump." While Emanuel has made a show of challenging Trump's efforts to defund sanctuary cities, Chicago's own policies exclude the people most at risk of being racially profiled by law enforcement. The city refuses to protect those whom police have labeled gang members or who have outstanding criminal warrants, among others. So Mijente has spearheaded a campaign to challenge the feel-good "sanctuary city" label and examine Chicago's criminal-justice practices.

That means partnering with groups like Organized Communities Against Deportation and Black Youth Project 100 to focus on Chicago's overpolicing and wanton labeling of black and brown people as gang members. It means showing up for traditionally black issues like criminal-justice reform—not in a superficial show of multiracial solidarity, but because law enforcement is often the first point of contact for undocumented immigrants before they're shoved into the deportation pipeline.

Mijente isn't alone in this fight: For years, organizers working with immigrants of color in cities like New York, Seattle, and Los Angeles have been pushing back against the criminalization of their communities. But, Unzueta argues, for too long too much Latino organizing has focused solely on immigration policy. This new moment requires a broader, more layered approach.

"Before [Trump], we were happy with getting the win by telling the good story," Unzueta said. "Now I feel like the solution is: We build power, get leverage, and change culture."

The Death Cult of Trumpism

In his appeals to a racist and nationalist chauvinism, Trump leverages tribal resentment against an emerging manifest common destiny.

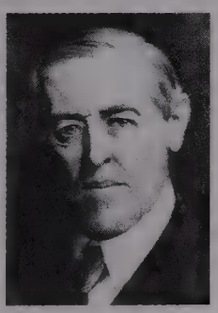
GREG GRANDIN

WHY NOW? IN TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF TRUMP'S EFFECTIVE use of racism to win the presidency, many have pointed to a long tradition of dog-whistling, reaching back decades. Trump is the nationalization of Nixon's Southern strategy, the shadow cast forward by Reagan's welfare queens and George H.W. Bush's Willie Horton. Writing before the general election, *Slate*'s Jamelle Bouie linked Trump's politicized racism to his predecessor's upending of the racial hierarchy. After the vote, Ta-Nehisi Coates described Trump as the country's first white president, in that whiteness is a negation of blackness, and Trump's driving passion seems to be a desire to negate the legitimacy and legacy of Barack Obama, the country's first African-American president.

Coates's point is profound, especially when read against those moral philosophers who say the right to political sovereignty can be claimed only by those who possess emotional sovereignty. "Self-command, self-possession," Woodrow Wilson wrote in 1889, are the pillars of America's exceptionalism. Setting Trump aside for the moment, Wilson—the man who segregated the federal civil service, celebrated the Ku Klux Klan, and launched a racist counterinsurgency in Haiti—must be considered among the whitest of white presidents. He believed that individuals qualified for political self-rule through personal self-rule, demonstrating that they could use virtue and reason to regulate passion and impulse. "Government as ours is a form of conduct," he said, "and its only stable foundation is character." Along with his predecessors and contemporaries, Wilson associated the virtue of self-regulation with white skin, contrasting property-possessing, self-commanding sovereigns with their opposites: unself-governable people of color. They imagined—in fantasies that fishtailed wildly between nostalgia and wrath—that African Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Mexicans were immature, childlike in their emotions and unable to distinguish between true liberty and licentiousness, between the pursuit of happiness and lust.

To the Trumpists, the very existence of people of color functions as an unwanted memento mori, a reminder of limits.

In a way, then, according to America's color-coded guide to political virtue and vice, Barack Obama might be considered the country's only white president, in the sense that he served almost as a Platonic ideal of ancient moral philosophy. In office, he was preternaturally self-governed and self-regulated—Vulcan-like, as some said, and in control of his emotions, especially his anger. This self-regulation is a burden of race, which must have weighed heavily on Obama, being not just the first African-American president in US history but also one who took the office during a moment of extraordinary economic and military crisis.



Woodrow Wilson, the whitest of white presidents.

Trump, by contrast, is all id and pure appetite, unspooling raw, insatiable, childish hunger every night on Twitter. He's the most unregulated, unself-governed president this country has ever had, an example of what happens to the psyche of rich white people after four decades of economic deregulation. But white folks—at least powerful ones—get to decide the exception to the rule. ("Some of the virtues of a freeman would be the vices of slaves," as one 1837 defense of slavery explained.) And that's what makes Trump the whitest of white presidents: He can openly tweet-mock moral conventions that hold that only those who demonstrate self-sovereignty are worthy of political sovereignty and still be the sovereign.

But to get back to Trump's psychic deregulation and Obama's overregulation: Both are responses to what came before. Why now? Because the frontier is closed, the safety valve shut. Whatever metaphor one wants to use, the ongoing effects of the ruinous 2003 war in Iraq and the 2007–08 financial meltdown are just two indicators that the promise of endless growth can no longer help organize people's aspirations, satisfy their demands, dilute the passions, contain the factions, or repress the extremes at the margins. We are entering the second "lost decade" of what Larry Summers calls "secular stagnation," and soon we'll be in the third decade of a war that Senator Lindsey Graham, among others, says will never end. Beyond these compounded catastrophes, there is a realization that the world is fragile and that we are trapped in an economic system that is well past sustainable or justifiable. As vast stretches of the West burn, as millions of trees die from global-warming-induced blight, as Houston and Puerto Rico flood, the oceans acidify, and bats and flying insects disappear in uncountable numbers, any given sentence from Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* could be plucked and used as a newspaper headline. ("A Vast Landscape Charred, and a Sky Full of Soot" ran the headline for a *New York Times* report on California's wildfires.)

In a nation like the United States, founded on a mythical belief in a kind of species immunity—less an American exceptionalism than exemptionism, an insistence that the nation was exempt from nature, society, history, even death—the realization that it can't go on forever is traumatic. "You forget what you want to remember," McCarthy wrote in *The Road*, to capture the torment of living in the postapocalypse, "and you remember what you want to forget." It's a good description of how those steeped in a definition of freedom as freedom from restraint must have felt living in Obama's America, when they rejected with a racist fury even conservative, corporate-friendly policy solutions to the multiple crises of health care, climate change, inequality, and immigration.

This ideal of freedom as infinity was only made possible through the domination of African Americans, Mexican Americans, Mexicans, Native Americans, and Chinese, as slave and cheap labor transformed stolen land into capital, cutting the tethers and launching the US economy into the stratosphere. And now, as we are all falling back to a wasted earth, the very existence of people of color functions as an unwanted memento mori, a reminder of limits, evidence that history imposes burdens and life contracts social obligations. That many Latino migrants come from countries where democracy means social democracy—and that, once here, they revitalize cities and join unions—only inflames the right-wing backlash. Social rights, within the libertarian framework of American freedom, symbolize much more than mere economic restraint. They invoke the ultimate restraint: death. An implied conflation of social rights, race, and mortality was what made, for some, the "death panel" line of attack on Obamacare effective.

Greg Grandin is writing a book titled The Wall: The Meaning of the Border in the New America *(Metropolitan Books).*

ILLUSTRATION BY **EDEL RODRIGUEZ**

Rebecca Solnit

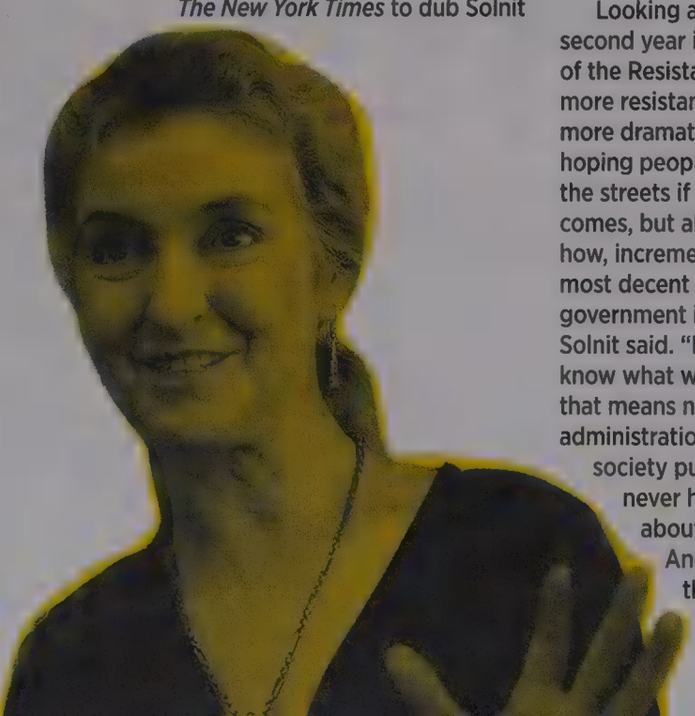
LEADING THE RESISTANCE

Providing hope in the dark.

JOHN NICHOLS

When the commander in chief debases the discourse with Twitter storms, and most of the media debases itself by imagining that the narrative of our times can be spelled out in 140 (or even 280) characters, it is easy to imagine that actual thinking has ceased. Then you read an essay or, better yet, pick up a book by Rebecca Solnit, and everything starts to make sense. Yes, these are maddening times, but there are explanations for how America went awry, and bold, smart strategies for how to rediscover the better angels of our nature.

Solnit anticipated 2017 with a canon that has long reflected on resistance—not merely to authoritarian leaders, but to the cruel systems of politics and commerce that weigh so heavily against people of color, the working class, and women. Her recent books *Men Explain Things to Me* and *The Mother of All Questions* inspired headlines like "Meet Rebecca Solnit, the woman who predicted #MeToo" (in Britain's *Telegraph*), just as her essays on resisting Trump (and the resurgence of interest in her 2004 book *Hope in the Dark*) led *The New York Times* to dub Solnit "the Voice of the Resistance."



As the first year of Trump's presidency evolved, it turned out that millions of Americans shared her rebellious sensibility. I asked Solnit if she had anticipated the level of resistance. "I did not," she replied. "I remember how opposing the post-9/11 Bush administration felt lonely, dangerous, and out of step with the majority, and I dreaded another wave of blind, fearful obedience in the wake of the cataclysmic election in which anyone who resisted might stick out as a target. I mean, I was going to stick it out if that's how it was going to be, but I was worried. On the eighth day after the election, I decided it was time to act on the evidence that the election had been illegitimate for many reasons and that Trump was quite likely colluding with a foreign power to win. At that point, there was a lot of stunned silence and psychic prostration. But wonderful people quickly began organizing around trying to convince the Electoral College to reject Trump, and resistance mushroomed, until by the day after the inauguration, the day of the Women's Marches all over the country, it was everywhere."

Looking ahead to Trump's second year in office, "the Voice of the Resistance" proposes... more resistance. "I think we need more dramatic action, and I'm hoping people are ready to flood the streets if and when the time comes, but also to recognize how, incrementally, everything most decent about the federal government is being dismantled," Solnit said. "I know that I don't know what will happen next, and that means not only what the administration does but how civil society pushes back. We've never had more uncertainty about what happens next. And the possibility that, this time around, we are the big backlash is there."

Maybe, then, Obama's personal overregulation served as an intolerable aide-mémoire for the social destruction wreaked by years of financial and trade deregulation presided over by his white predecessors. The collective response (by a minority of voters) was to transmute the fear of death into a drive unto death, electing a president whose psyche is decomposing before our eyes to finish the job of deregulation. The tax bill is Trump's Enabling Act—or, better, Disabling Act—ensuring that whoever comes next can't reverse course.

Trumpism is a death cult. It counts among its priests a sheriff who tortured the poorest among us. Its saints are the victims of colored crime, and its sinners are African Americans (living reminders that American freedom was made possible only by American slavery), Latino migrants (themselves the victims of decades of trade deregulation, who come bearing a political tradition that says health care, education, and human dignity are human rights), and refugees from regions devastated by US militarism. But the cult has proved so confounding—which partly explains why those who dismiss it as immoral buffoonery find it hard to come up with an effective alternative—because what came before was also a death cult.

Trump's national chauvinism is often presented as the opposite of postwar internationalism, which it is. But US-led internationalism during its golden age was profoundly skewed. It held up an ideal of formal universal equality among nations even as, according to the Sierra Club's calculations, the United States, "with less than 5 percent of world population," consumed "one-third of the world's paper, a quarter of the world's oil, 23 percent of the coal, 27 percent of the aluminum, and 19 percent of the copper." Our "per capita use of energy, metals, minerals, forest products, fish, grains, meat, and even fresh water," which all increased by a factor of 17 between 1900 and 1989, "dwarfs that of people living in the developing world." It took an enormous amount of violence—in Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America—to maintain those numbers, and the pretense of calling this arrangement "universalism" could only be maintained so long as the promise of endless economic growth remained credible.

Trump won by running against the entire legacy of the postwar order: endless war, austerity, "free trade," unfettered corporate power, and inequality. A year into his tenure, the war has expanded, the Pentagon's budget has increased, and deregulation has accelerated. Tax cuts will continue the class war against the poor, and judicial and executive-agency appointments will increase monopoly rule.

Unable to offer an alternative other than driving the existing agenda forward at breakneck speed, Trumpism's only chance at political survival is to handicap Earth's odds of survival. Trump leverages tribal resentment against an emerging manifest common destiny, a true universalism that recognizes that we all share the same vulnerable planet. He stokes an enraged refusal of limits, even as those limits are recognized. "We're going to see the end of the world in our generation," a coal-country voter said in a recent *Politico* profile, explaining what he knows is his dead-end support for Trump. ■

The Resistance Is Local

BILL McKIBBEN

Unlike on Twitter, it's hard to be a jerk in face-to-face meetings.

Citizens on duty: Vermonters gather to vote on a school budget.

WHENEVER PROGRESS IS BLOCKED IN WASHINGTON, THE PRESsure for progress always finds other outlets. During the George W. Bush administration, for instance, environmentalists looked to state and local governments for action on climate change, and the result was a slew of commitments that helped build the renewable-energy industry. The same thing is happening now—even more so. With the utter hostility to science on display in Washington, we're all working hard to persuade cities and states to uphold the Paris climate accord by committing to 100 percent renewable energy. Pioneered by the Sierra Club and joined by groups like 350.org, this drive has had notable success: It's not just the Berkeleys and the Madisons that have made the promise, but Salt Lake City and San Diego and Atlanta. The day Trump shamed the nation by withdrawing from the climate accord—proclaiming that he'd been elected to govern "Pittsburgh, not Paris"—the mayor of Pittsburgh announced that his city would go 100 percent renewable. That remains one of the high points of the year's broad resistance.

But this move toward the local may turn out to be more than the usual tactical swing. The bizarreness of the president—the ugliness of his politics and the poison of his personality—may prompt many of us to start thinking about the problem of scale in our political life.

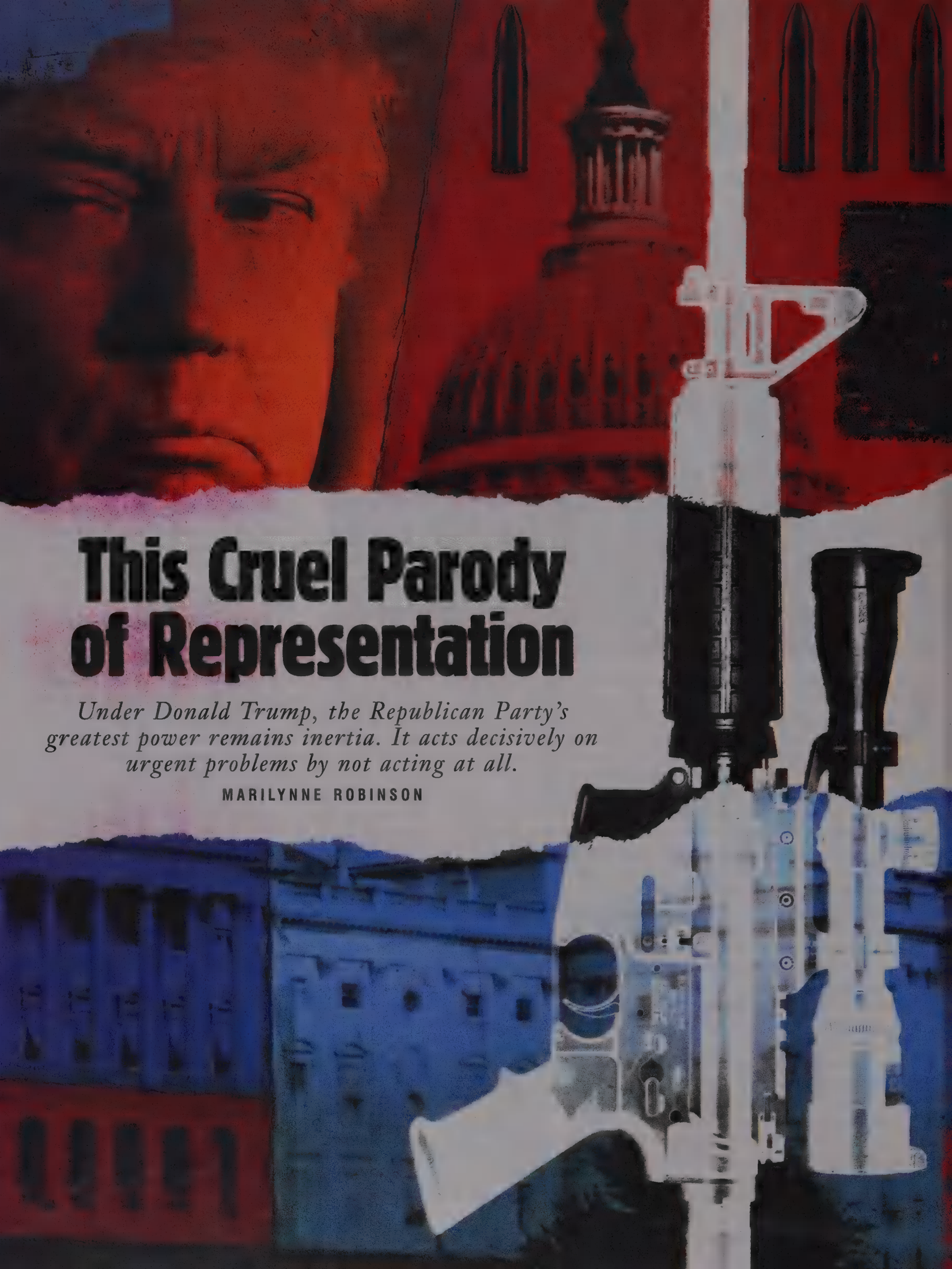
The bizarreness of the president may prompt us to start thinking about the problem of scale in our political life.

I live in Vermont. It's one of the most rural states in the Union, and it's as white as typing paper. So it should have been, statistically, a fairly Trumpish place: Indeed, New Hampshire just to the east and upstate New York just to the west tilted somewhat in that direction. But Vermont did not, and I think it has at least a little to do with the peculiar institution at the heart of our political life: the town meeting. On the first Tuesday in March, everyone in each town gets together in the church hall or the school gym, and there they jointly make the decisions necessary to govern the town for the year to come. Does the school roof have another 12 months left in it? How much should we set aside for plowing the roads next winter? (Occasionally, we also address national and global issues: The nuclear-freeze movement was largely born in Vermont town meetings.)

One result of this remnant of Athenian democracy is that it's hard to get away with being an absolute jerk. Were someone to appear at our town meeting using the language that our president uses daily in his tweets, he'd be listened to briefly and then ignored. Obviously, you can't make a town work with that kind of bellicosity. In fact, I doubt there are many cities that would elect Trump as mayor, because vandalism is less funny when you have to look at the wall every day. But on a vast national scale, it's perhaps easier for us to be irresponsible, to vote for "shaking things up" or for the sheer entertainment value of watching someone give it to our enemies.

And this is one reason why it's so important to root the resistance in local places, to have City Council members as well as congresspeople and senators. We obviously can't neglect Washington—global warming, above all, is a reminder that there are plenty of problems that need to be solved at as high a level as possible. But the canker in our political life, the ugly toxins that threaten to wreck us as a nation, may be more easily fought at the local level, where Twitter doesn't mean much. A strong community is a useful bulwark against hate and stupidity. It's not a guarantee that ugliness won't flourish (look at Joe Arpaio in Arizona, a proto-Trump if ever there was one), but even when it does, the damage can be contained. If we're going to reverse our dire situation, I imagine much of the impetus will come from gritty and real places. ■

Bill McKibben is the author of 16 books, most recently Radio Free Vermont: A Fable of Resistance. *He is the co-founder of 350.org.*



This Cruel Parody of Representation

Under Donald Trump, the Republican Party's greatest power remains inertia. It acts decisively on urgent problems by not acting at all.

MARILYNNE ROBINSON

WHENEVER SOME NEW MASSACRE IS PERPETRATED IN THIS country, the usual voices say that the tragedy should not be politicized. This response is so inevitable that it can be assumed to produce the desired effect: the tamping down of outrage in deference to the horror of the crime. Their right to sanctimoniousness having been tacitly conceded, these concerned voices add that in such moments of national crisis, we must all come together. There should be no divisiveness, they say, which in practical terms means no assigning of responsibility. Yet the moment of unity and calm deliberation never comes, because there is always a new massacre, or because the horror of these crimes is not of a kind to be diminished by time, or because the implied promise that the problem will be looked at and acted on has never been made in good faith. In any case, the public is hushed like children, closed out of the deliberations of an inner circle who knowingly weigh their own interests against the certainty that Americans will again die en masse in their schools or theaters or churches. Thoughts and prayers cost nothing, and they offend no donors.

The matter of gun control is paradigmatic in being "depoliticized." Since politics is the only purchase that ordinary citizens in a democracy have on their government, every significant public issue should of course be processed politically. The graver the question the country faces, the more thoroughly it should be debated, so that the decision of the majority can be reflected in legislation and in the outcomes of elections. This sounds a little Periclean, but in fact it is simply politics minus the sleights and obstructions that have compromised our democracy.

Terrible history has its uses. During all the long years that slavery persisted in the United States, the proslavery side in Congress was large and powerful in part because of the three-fifths clause in the Constitution. Enslaved people were "represented" by swollen delegations from the South who were absolutely and systematically hostile to their interests. The Congress was bitter and deadlocked, disgraced as an institution by this cruel parody of representation. The distortion of the electorate was a corruption of politics that obstructed movement on this essential issue. We have for some time seen a version of this phenomenon, a paralysis in Washington that effectively denies the public transparent and considered policy. Congress has been marched any number of times down the cul-de-sac of health-care repeal, creating a certain appearance of activity while preserving the effects of inertia. (Conversely, the speed with which the Republicans' recent tax overhaul was proposed and passed despite its complexity, together with the absence of normal discussion and debate, suggests a bill handed to the White House and Congress by a think tank or PAC. So, too, does its notably detailed and consistent attention to the interests of Republican constituencies, all of which merely underscores the undemocratic nature of the whole undertaking.)

As voters, we are offered identity when we should be offered responsibility.

Those who want to shut down discussion when the shock of the latest enormity is most strongly felt are warning away those who might attempt to find partisan advantage in the event, without reference to the merits of the case they might make—or else fearfully aware of its merits. Anxiety is acute because on this issue, as on so many others, the parties are starkly at odds. Sick of seeing our people dead in our streets, the voters might favor the party that wants to do something over the party that wants to do nothing. As in the matter of slavery, doing nothing is in effect a potent agenda, because, in the absence of the kind of intervention that the public might make if it had a functioning politics, the problem grows and spreads and becomes more deeply entrenched, more intractable.

THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH HAD THREE-FIFTHS OF its disenfranchised included in the population figures that determined the size of its congressional delegations. We have gerrymandering. The consequences are the same. An objective that a functioning politics would put at risk is realized through the defeat of politics. There are now so many powerful guns in private hands in the United States that, as a consequence of years of delay, the problem they pose can be represented as beyond the powers of mere legislation to meliorate. The implication is that an important public issue has been placed permanently out of the reach of public decision and action, where it will therefore remain. There is now a new model of freedom that at best amounts to standing in rows at firing ranges, shooting fierce and costly weapons at stationary targets. It has largely displaced the idea of individual and civic freedom that would bring democratic scrutiny to bear on the wisdom and decency of making these weapons widely available. A Supreme Court did rule in favor of the interpretation of the Second Amendment that has permitted this to happen, for the moment putting the problem more or less beyond political remedy. A Supreme Court also gave us the *Dred Scott* decision, which undergirded and expanded the rights of slaveholders. Our complex system, a sort of rock/paper/scissors arrangement that makes all authority conditional and circumstantial, was not meant to leave us without recourse when bad decisions are made. Congress could pass gun-control legislation, if it were a functioning institution. But in this matter above all, we have learned that even overwhelming public opinion counts for nothing.

Congress can be as partisan as it is because it is effectively depoliticized, which means that the calcified majority party is immune, therefore indifferent, to the public will. Party discipline means that the representation of states is radically subordinated to a leadership whose agenda need not be aired in public. The only real question for our legislators is whether the majority party will vote en bloc, whether a smug little man from Kentucky or Wisconsin has once again brought them all to heel. The answer is virtually always yes. This system erases any acknowledgment of the differing cultures and interests of the various regions that real representation would require. Maine votes with Mississippi in Republican solidarity, though no one knows any longer what the Republican Party is or stands for. Its great power is inertia. It acts most decisively by not acting. There will be no debate about gun laws. There will be no rise in the minimum wage. Health-care policy has dropped into the void. Infrastructure thus far has been all but forgotten, except by ordinary

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ILLUSTRATION BY **TIM ROBINSON**

citizens who live with its decay. No rationalization need be offered.

Especially after another terrible Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United*, opened the floodgates to moneyed interests, the press and the public must assume that persons and organizations distinguished for nothing but devotion to their own immense profits have bought their way into the process of government, bypassing the dreary and uncertain business of making a case to the electorate, further depoliticizing public life. Politics are the nervous system and the musculature of democracy. They are its method and decorum, its means of finding value in differences through compromise and accommodation. They are its means of enlisting the talent and insight of people at large. As in the matter of guns and the atrocities associated with them, politicizing an issue—assuming this is done within a framework of authentically political government—opens it to debate that is substantive because it can have consequences. We have descended into tribalism because, as voters, we are offered identity when we should be offered responsibility. It seems never to be considered that the inchoate frustration abroad in the land might have something to do with the fact that people have been quietly but effectively dispossessed of their status as citizens of a democracy.

In the absence of real discussion and debate, new and urgent problems can be cast in old and irrelevant terms. American boundaries are indeed breached and trammeled. No information, no institution, no good name is secure, because all around the world there are individuals and governments ready to make hostile use of the Internet. Russia's fingerprints are all over our recent election, and nothing is done about it. The balm we are offered for this failure of our borders is a beautiful wall, the most antique and irrelevant response to a present and sophisticated threat that could well be conceived. This wall, whether realized or only imagined, is intensely politicized, in the sense that one party can rouse its crowds to passionate chants simply by mentioning it. By this means, the very present problem of securing our electronic boundaries, so that the information we receive and exchange is basically sound and our voting system works the way it should, has been depoliticized. The White House does nothing and says nothing. It is true that if the issue were addressed openly, the debate would become highly partisan, since the Russian tamperers apparently favor Republicans, a fact of interest in itself.

If, in allowing our politics to be taken out of our hands, we have, for a time at least, lost our democracy, how are we to think of ourselves? Perhaps we have to be the land of the free if we are also to be the home of the brave. There seems to be an erosion of the old confidence that we have something singular and precious together, something worth defending against the pressures that continuously beset free societies. Dignity comes with this kind of identification, and purpose as well. We seem to have broken up into any number of smaller identity groups, a state of things that differs profoundly from the old mosaic of civil society in that many of these groups take strength from the belief that the larger culture is hostile and corrupt. Obviously, this is not the kind of assumption that is helpful in maintaining a democracy, or even a society at some degree of peace with itself.

Making America great again depends on definitions that no one provides.

THE ADAMANT RESISTANCE OF REPUBLICANS TO any attempt to make the public safer from military weapons may well be ideological. Since they have resorted to nonpolitical means to hold and assert power, they are never obliged to say what vision of the country or its future can be reconciled with their refusal even to allow debate in Congress of this agonizing problem of gun violence. Donald Trump has ascribed the massacre in a Texas church to mental illness. Paul Ryan has suggested on another gruesome occasion that the mental-health system should be strengthened, presumably to identify people who might turn to extreme violence—this from the leader of a party that is loath to fund Medicaid. If an initiative of this kind were designed to address mental health in the demographic most inclined to carry out these acts of mayhem, that would be white men. They are not a group that Republicans are ready to offend. If, in the interest of fairness, the whole adult population came under scrutiny, the system would collapse under its own weight, overwhelmed with cost and pointlessness. Only a minute percentage of people of any description are inclined toward extreme violence, and they cannot be identified before the fact, putting to one side the old rituals of due process. Individuals singled out as potentially dangerous would be harshly stigmatized in the absence of any crime. We can hope that this proposal, so authoritarian in its implications, is simply another sop thrown to a restive public, cynical and impracticable and therefore just as dead as any effective legislation would be. Let us say that the interests being protected at such peril to our lives and our system are economic. There is the microeconomy of the NRA, passing millions into the campaigns of its congressional loyalists, and there is the macroeconomy of the arms industry. If these interests are defended in the face of such appalling cost to public safety and morale and to the country's good name, then the issue of gun control should again be considered paradigmatic. The great question that divides Americans, from one another and from their past, is whether the country should invest in itself, that is, in its citizenry. In the past, this has included the costs to industry involved in keeping food safe, air breathable, water drinkable. That these are costs is clear from the resistance that such regulations, and the agencies that would enforce them, reliably meet.

Under the present regime, there is no mention of shared advancement, no vision of a good society. Making America great depends on definitions that no one provides or offers for debate. Old institutions that have distributed wealth—for example, public lands and public schools—are under pressure now as if they were somehow illegitimate, though since Theodore Roosevelt the parks have given us each a share in a glorious, primal America, and since the 17th century the schools have given most of us, in the North, at least, a basis for learning and understanding, and the means to enrich our lives and our communities. This is wealth in a larger sense of the word than our plutocrats now give it. They clearly feel that money should intervene between people and privilege—between any child and a good school, for example. Whatever is not monetized is socialist, by their lights tantamount to sponging or theft. Their respect for money, on the other hand, is entirely sufficient to silence any qualms about its origins, including theft. Only consider the billions that have been extruded by means of the monetization of state holdings in the former Eastern bloc. Masses of capital derived from the passing into private, or quasi-private, hands of oil and mineral resources have flowed into fantastically overpriced real estate in London and New York, into lawyers' pockets, into

dubious banks and shell companies—so much wealth, in fact, that ordinary people in those countries would surely be more prosperous if it were invested at home. Wealth is relative, of course, and on these grounds alone general prosperity is a burden on the rich. It is apparent that the people in these regions have no claim on the value realized from industries and resources that had been notionally theirs. Only think what a billionaire or two could extract from Yellowstone Park, or perhaps by strip-mining the Badlands! More billions, of course, hiring more lobbyists to head off a rise in the minimum wage. London real-estate prices would skyrocket overnight. These need not be American billionaires, since hyper-wealth transcends nation. So we learn from the boy giants of the Internet.

This wealth is very largely in hiding, and the wealth it amasses will be hidden, too. The great object of all this concealment is to avoid taxes. Taxes are, after all, an acknowledgment that one lives in a society and benefits from it. Or, from an increasingly dominant point of view, taxes are an expropriation of the hard-earned rewards of winners, ceded to the mass of resentful losers. The moneyed are self-righteous now, and resentful as well. Any plausible claimant to the title "billionaire," be he slumlord, usurer, or fraudster, enjoys presumptive respect from his peers, from his partisan clients, and from a dishearteningly large part of the American public. How Russian billionaires rationalize their wealth I can only speculate, but clearly some of the American ones participate in the same mind-set to be found in various forms throughout our culture now. They too consider themselves a minority within a hostile and decadent civi-

LEADING THE RESISTANCE

31st Street Swing Left

For making the crucial difference.

JOAN WALSH

When I spoke with Kelly Fowler back in August, the Virginia Beach candidate for the state House of Delegates was on the verge of leaving the race. Depressed by conflicting messages from state Democratic leaders, she didn't understand the chicken-and-egg approach taken by all the establishment groups: Candidates had to raise a lot of money if they wanted to raise more money, and wasn't that just making the rich richer? There were 17 candidates running in GOP-held districts that Hillary Clinton carried in 2016. Fowler was one of them, but she didn't have enough cash even to pay the campaign manager who was set to start the next week.

At this crucial moment, Fowler got the help she needed to stay in the race, and she won her seat on November 7. When we talked the day after her victory, with her young daughters underfoot in the kitchen, I asked which group made the biggest difference in keeping her afloat. Was it Emily's List? Run for Something, which supported first-time candidates? Win Virginia, run by Tom Perriello after he lost the Democratic gubernatorial primary? I knew they'd all pitched in.

All those groups helped, Fowler told me, "but it was actually 31st Street Swing Left that kept me in the race." I asked her to repeat that: 31st what? 31st Street where? In Virginia Beach?

Not Virginia Beach, Fowler told me; she wasn't quite sure where. I decided I had to figure it out, because in all the reporting I did on how the anti-Trump resistance powered first-time candidates—most of them women—to victory, I hadn't heard of a group making that kind of a difference. So Fowler connected me with two of 31st Street's leaders, "Jim and Larry."

Jim Shelton and Larry Buc are quick to share credit for

Fowler's win, and for the victories of at least 14 other candidates their group supported. "Seriously, we were all sharing information about candidates like Kelly who were great but struggling," Shelton said. "The story is how well the grassroots groups worked together."

Both he and Buc wanted me to know that their sisters are also involved with 31st Street, and they wanted to tell me about Race for Democracy and Why Virginia Matters and We of Action and other small grassroots groups I hadn't heard of. Nonetheless, 31st Street was the group that quickly sent Fowler more than $3,000 when it heard her SOS, eventually giving her $10,000 in total.

With members in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC, 31st Street Swing Left was initially organized to defeat Republican Barbara Comstock in Virginia's 10th Congressional District in 2018. But the group decided to "warm up for turning out Comstock" by working on House of Delegates races in her district, Buc said. Then it set its sights wider to focus on "mid-tier" candidates, the ones who had a shot but hadn't been anointed as sure winners—folks like Fowler, Democratic Socialists of America member Lee Carter, and Dawn Adams, the first out lesbian elected to Virginia's House, along with about a dozen more.

Shelton was appalled by the Democratic establishment's low expectations. "They had about five candidates everyone worked with," he recalled. "They were very attractive. I understood. But what can you do if you only pick up five seats?" A five-vote swing in the hugely gerrymandered House of Delegates would make it 61–39 in favor of Republicans. The work of groups like 31st Street Swing Left helped Democrats win at least 15 seats, with control of the chamber now hanging on a couple of recounts.

Shelton and Buc are a funny combination of bashful and proud: They welcome my attention but worry that I'm ignoring dozens of great groups responsible for Virginia's Democratic tsunami. A few dozen of those groups are still holding monthly meetings, they tell me, to tease out the lessons of November and plan for 2018.

In an e-mail, Buc boils down the message they want to share: "1) There is nothing exceptional about what we did, 2) Others did similar things, 3) We need more people to do this, and 4) We can train people to do it." 31st Street Swing Left is so encouraged by what it learned that the group has moved beyond just targeting Comstock to look at three other Republican-held congressional districts where Democrats did well in November.

Oh, and 31st Street is in Washington, DC, where Lisa Herrick, one of the group's founders, lives.

Claudia Rankine

LEADING THE RESISTANCE

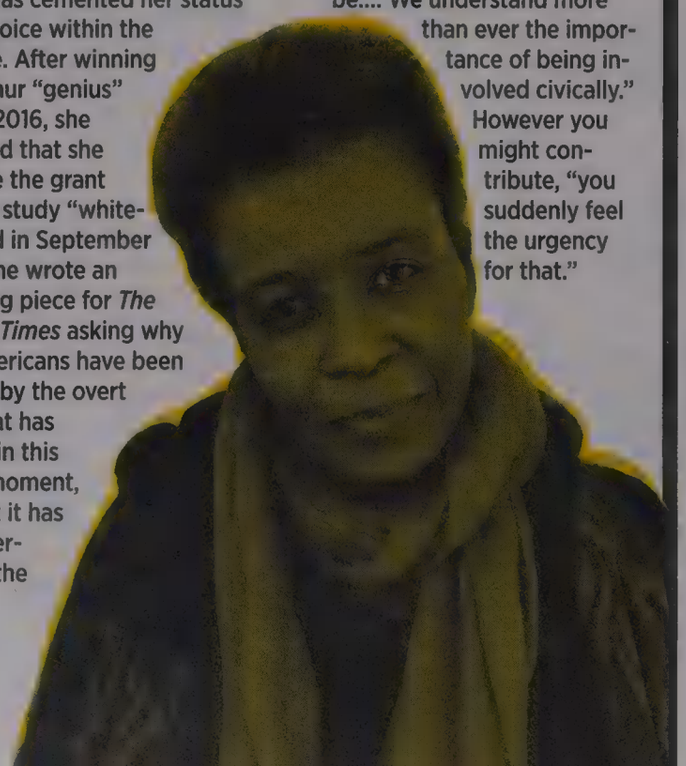
Writing for the resistance.

COLLIER MEYERSON

Poet, essayist, and Yale University professor Claudia Rankine emerged as a somewhat inadvertent hero of the anti-Trump resistance before Trump had even become the Republican nominee. At a rally early on in his campaign, a young black woman, prominently visible behind the candidate, sat reading a book. That book was Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric*, a sprawling, essayistic poem, published in 2014, about the scourge of racism in African-American life. ("You can't put the past behind you. It's buried in you; it's turned your flesh into its own cupboard," Rankine wrote.) The woman, 23-year-old Johari Osayi Idusuyi, said she'd attended the rally "with an open mind" but was quickly turned off by the bullying that Trump and the crowd directed toward protesters. The best way to pass the time, she decided, was to keep reading. "It wasn't just the fact that she held up *Citizen* as a form of protest," Rankine told me over the phone. "It was also that she insisted on her right to protest. Protest in the form of reading—that's even better."

A little over two years later, Rankine has cemented her status as a key voice within the resistance. After winning a MacArthur "genius" award in 2016, she announced that she would use the grant money to study "whiteness," and in September of 2017, she wrote an unflinching piece for *The New York Times* asking why some Americans have been surprised by the overt racism that has emerged in this political moment, given that it has been festering since the country's founding. "Americans continue to request that our president indulge our national sentimentality and with a show of good manners denounce white supremacy," she wrote. But "[w]as there ever a moment when the persecution of non-white Americans wasn't the norm?" Still, the emergence of a Republican presidential campaign that "ran on racial hate" is significant. As Rankine elaborated in our conversation, "The force [of that racial hate] was amplified with this administration. Whether it's micro- or macro[aggressions], it's all racism," and with Trump's election, it has now been given "further legislative power."

For Rankine, the expectation of racism doesn't lessen its blow. "To expect something and then to have to incorporate it are two very different things," she said. "And as much as I was not surprised about the result of the election, it still was devastating to me." Yet the response of ordinary women to this administration *has* come as a big surprise. "It's a new moment of asserting the rights of women," Rankine told me. "I'm delighted by that, and also curious to see how far-reaching it will be.... We understand more than ever the importance of being involved civically." However you might contribute, "you suddenly feel the urgency for that."



lization. Like the religious right and the gun lobby, they are eager to be pandered to and to interpose themselves between public opinion and government.

THERE IS A CLEAR SURFACE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN our emergent oligarchy and the oligarchy in Russia and the former Eastern bloc. Fantastical wealth now translates without embarrassment into assertions of power, in contempt of the ideals of social equality that were claimed by both sides through most of the 20th century. We describe the phenomenon to ourselves in terms of polarization, suggesting that it differs only in degree from normal or traditional American economic relations. Presumably Soviet corruption lies behind their version of it: It appears that their oligarchs enjoy wealth at the pleasure of Putin's regime, and that they act as agents of the state when called upon, buying into foreign economies, influencing foreign elections, dazzling venal Americans, and so on. Russia may never achieve general prosperity or aspire to it, but it has learned that great concentrations of wealth can be, so to speak, weaponized, made powerful instruments of foreign policy. For many Americans, money is the universal solvent. It grants wide social access and contact with people of influence. It involves itself in the development and the ethos of crucial industries. The pretense can be maintained, by those looking to profit, that money is just potential energy, as innocent of its origin as a kilowatt. So all this money, to the extent that it represents actual value, which is no doubt the same as the extent to which it represents theft of the resources of the country of origin, flows into our economy, another dark stream of unpoliticized influence and power.

I don't know if there is a name for a regime like this, parasitic and invasive, lifting itself into significance by, in the biological sense, colonizing a strong and complex host society. It is very much a creature of special circumstances: the Soviet Union's collapse and the opportunities to reshape national economies that followed from it; the Internet, which made sophisticated countries utterly porous to foreign influence; a desire on the part of Vladimir Putin and others to make Russia great again; and, crucially, a moral and intellectual fashion still prevalent in the West that subordinates ethics and the public interest to simple greed. Our heroes of capitalism are great job creators for the offshore banking system.

American oligarchy, in stark contrast with the Russian version, is not in the control of the state and is not beholden to anyone's vision of the national interest. Our plutocratic technocrats choose not to speak to Congress, no doubt reluctant to see a political parsing of their business arrangements. This despite the fact that their "platforms," however passively, or with passivity as a convenient excuse, have had enormous negative consequences for our democracy. The opportunistic nationalism of the Russian system and the calculated atomization of the American non-system both exclude from consideration the people and the polity. Neither the Russians nor the Americans linger over the question of society's well-being or its future. Libertarians talk about a planned economy as "the road to serfdom." The end of politics is a shortcut. ■

Health | EXCLUSIVE

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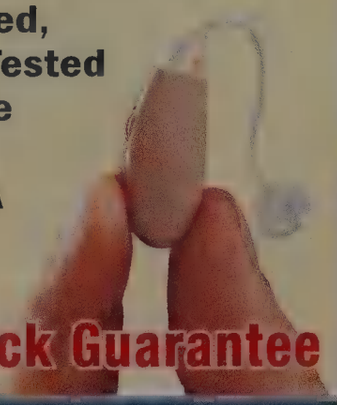

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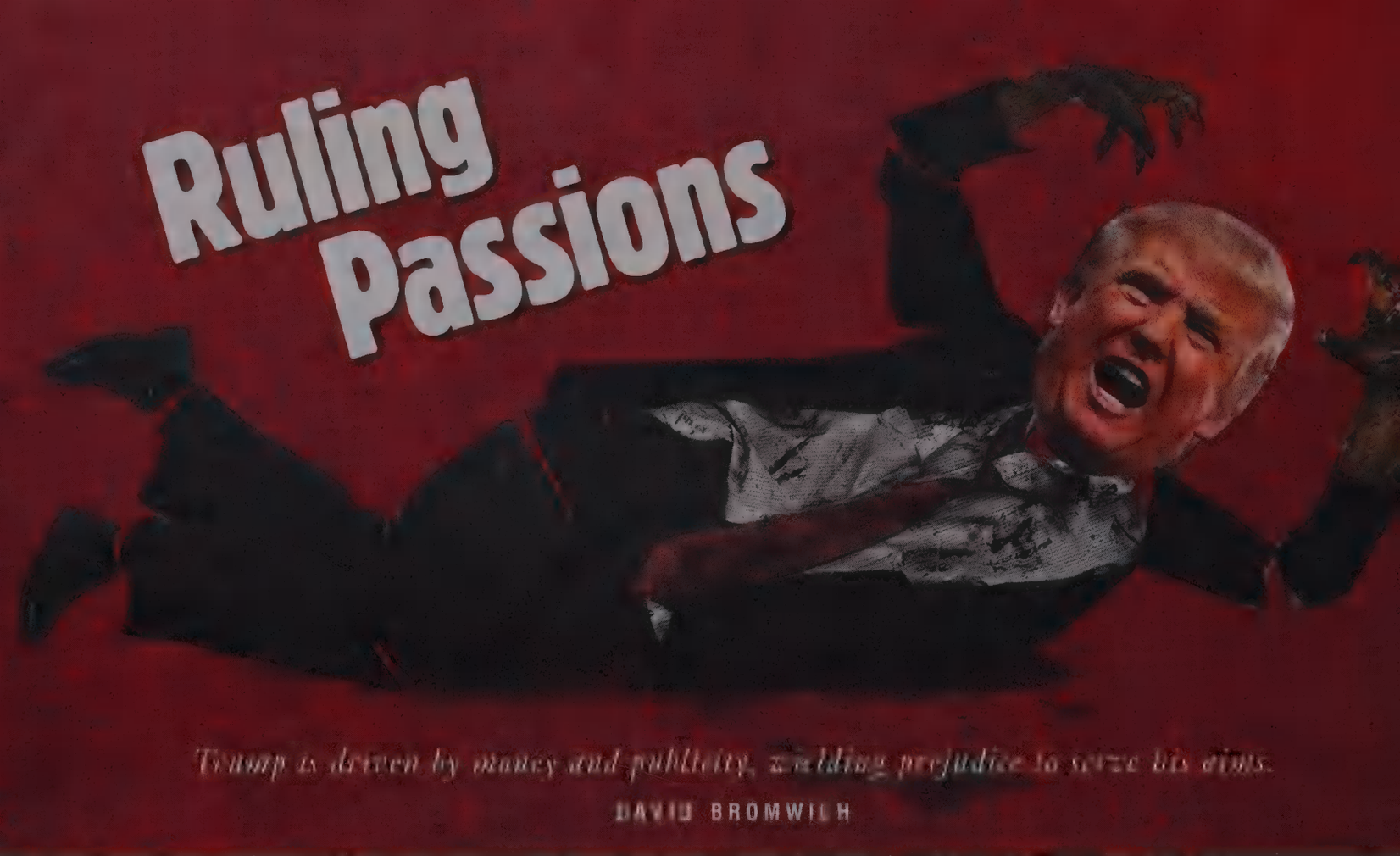


Trump is driven by money and publicity, wielding prejudice to seize his aims.

DAVID BROMWICH

NOTHING BOTH NEW AND USEFUL CAN BE SAID ABOUT DONALD Trump. Twenty-five years ago, in *Trump: The Deals and the Downfall*, Wayne Barrett portrayed the man as a wounded monster, a characterization that remains accurate. We can't know the cause of the wound, and we certainly can't heal it. But the baseness of Trump's character is evident in the acts of the people he has appointed: Scott Pruitt cutting the EPA's protections for clean air and water, or Rex Tillerson eliminating hundreds of positions in the State Department.

Trump's tax-overhaul bill is a composite action, the product equally of the president, Republican leaders, and the donors whose interests they serve. On November 29, in St. Charles, Missouri, Trump made his last big sales pitch:

> The current system has cost our nation millions of American jobs, trillions and trillions of dollars, and billions of hours wasted on paperwork and compliance. It is riddled with loopholes that let some special interests—including myself, in all fairness [*laughter*]—it's going to cost me a fortune, this thing, believe me [*laughter*]. Believe me. This is not good for me. Me, it's not so—I have some very wealthy friends. Not so happy with me—but that's OK. You know, I keep hearing Schumer: "This is for the wealthy." Well, if it is, my friends don't know about it [*laughter*].

Trump was ad-libbing and the audience was with him, from the go-for-broke "trillions and trillions" to the punch line "This is not good for me." He is, after all, an entertainer-politician for whom even the United States has no precedent—Ronald Reagan, George Wallace, and Joan Rivers bundled into one package.

Trump's presidency is one continuous train wreck, and yet his main goal has been accomplished.

Trump's presidency is one continuous train wreck, and yet his main goal has been accomplished. Publicity and money are his ruling passions—the personal thermodynamics that underlie his whims—and the newspapers and networks that hate him are, in a sense, his creatures. He commands their headlines every day. As for his popular following, Americans like a man who likes money—and the more fun he has, the better. "Publicity hounds" were once despised, but exceptions were always made for playboys and movie stars. Trump is a low-hanging star, and his morning tweets have made him a daily celebrity. He stands for the beleaguered middle class against the glossy people in the pages of *Vanity Fair*. He's the rogue billionaire who left the approved billionaires in the dust. Somehow, these twin fictions—the squire defending the suburban homeowner; the silly toff who, deep down, is "one of us"—add up to a symmetrical appeal.

The idea that Trump is essentially a fascist, essentially a racist, essentially a misogynist dies hard. He is a series of postures, projects, and slogans, and he wields whatever prejudice suits his momentary aim. Right now, Trump is for expelling Latin American immigrants, keeping out Muslims, threatening war against North Korea and Iran, and enriching the already rich. The wall with Mexico was a piece of pure demagoguery, invented almost at random to jump-start his candidacy. The fixation on Iran comes out of a studiously nursed resentment of the 1979 hostage crisis, a gut feeling that plenty of his fellow citizens share, uninformed by any historical knowledge. Trump extends the same hostility to most of Islam because he hasn't mastered the difference between Shia and Sunni.

Trump entered politics in an age when voters looked with bewilderment at the abyss that separates the wealthy few and the rest of society—a bewilderment that could easily pass into awe of those on top. The same moment saw millions of people intoxicated with a new tool kit of public-

ILLUSTRATION BY **NURUL HANA ANWAR**

ity, made democratically available via Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram. You are the star of your show; the only question is how many will "like" you. Trump's tweets are the instrument by which he retains a hold on the one-third of the electorate that refuses to desert him. These early-morning emissions draw the attention he craves as much as he once craved entry to the Manhattan clubs that rejected him. And the reunions and photo ops at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey—what are they but a dingy end-zone dance, addressed to the grandees of New York, Hollywood, and Martha's Vineyard? He is saying, with the insolence of the snubbed: "Yeah, I buy my friends! But you people—you're all bought."

There's a way to score a victory over Trump that might lead somewhere: discuss the corruption of the man and his business career; make it a case in point of a greater corruption. AIG was bailed out in the 2008 collapse, and other money firms helped to their feet, while ordinary workers with their stolen pensions went begging. In the same way, Trump was put on a friendly allowance by the state of New Jersey when his casinos went bankrupt. His party has had nothing to say against his nailing a dollar sign to the presidency, with new Trump real-estate developments being announced in India even now.

And yet, starting with Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016, and continuing with the minority strategy of Democratic leaders like Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, the opposition in Congress and its media allies haven't bothered to make this case. They have simply assumed that people would agree that Trump is a horror and turn against him accordingly. Over the past 12 months, the Democrats have focused on two stories, one political and the other moral. The political narrative centers on Russia and, more particularly, on Trump's supposed love of Vladimir Putin. Here, the Democrats are striking adventurist Cold War attitudes whose dangers they haven't remotely grasped. The moral narrative, concerning workplace sexual misconduct and the ousting of harassers, is something different: Most of the revelations seem genuine and disturbing, but it isn't clear what legal reforms the Democrats envisage. The idea that the purge will reach all the way to the White House and pull down the president is a fantastic conceit, and the delayed accusations, extorted contrition, and indifference to due process have disgusted many people in a way that may surprise Kirsten Gillibrand in 2020.

It seems possible that Robert Mueller's investigation will lead to revelations about money laundering—financial crimes that Trump committed before he was elected president. But even in view of the Russian contacts of Michael Flynn, Jared Kushner, Donald Jr., and others after Trump was warned by the FBI of Russian interference, the findings might not yield knockdown proof of collusion in stealing the 2016 election. Meanwhile, what is the position of the Democrats on peaceful competition with Russia and China? Do they dissent from Trump's opinion that Iran is the greatest terrorist threat in the world today? The Democrats are not heartless—Trump could never have been their candidate—but they have not yet begun to think. ■

David Bromwich teaches at Yale University and is the author of Moral Imagination.

LEADING THE RESISTANCE

Carmen Yulín Cruz

Political courage in the eye of the storm.

GEORGE ZORNICK

When Hurricane Maria lashed Puerto Rico in late September, wreaking havoc upon the island, San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz was cast into a familiar role: the local official scrambling to secure aid for her beleaguered constituents. When she wasn't wading through the capital's flooded streets and personally guiding residents to safety, she was agitating for a stronger response from the federal government, which was struggling to get food and rescue workers to the commonwealth.

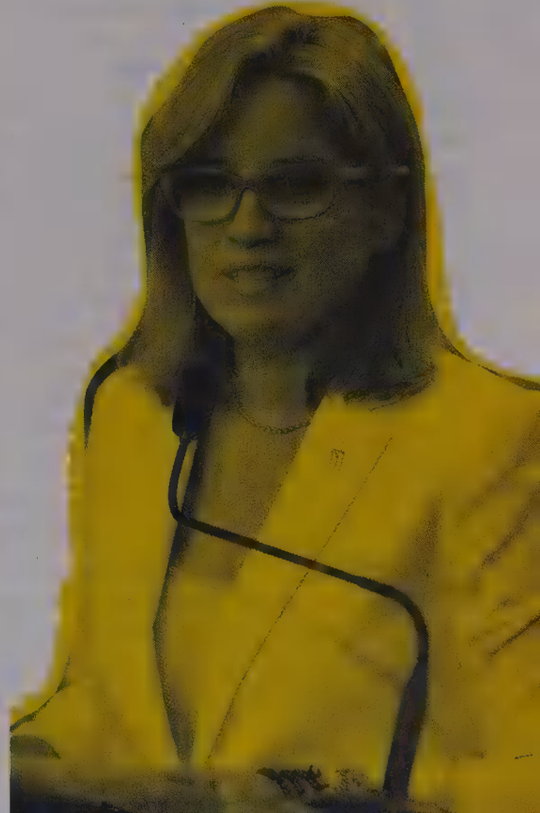
After viewing the wreckage, then-acting Secretary for Homeland Security Elaine Duke claimed the disaster was "really a 'good news' story in terms of our ability to reach people and the limited number of deaths." Cruz's response to Duke, aired on CNN, was unsparing. "This is, damn it, this is *not* a 'good news' story. This is a 'people are dying' story. This is a 'life or death' story. This is 'there's a truckload of stuff that cannot be taken to people' story," she said.

With that, Cruz found herself in another now-familiar role: the mayor of a disaster-stricken area who is suddenly attacked by the president of the United States. Just as he had done with the mayor of London following the horrific London Bridge attack last June, President Trump, from his golf course in New Jersey, launched several Twitter fusillades against Cruz, accusing her of being a pawn of the Democrats and of failing to get her "workers" mobilized for the hurricane response.

If one were to make an accounting of the people truly harmed in the first year of Trump's presidency—people who have lost their health, their property, even their lives—the residents of Puerto Rico would be high on the list. As of this writing, over 1,000 people are estimated to have died as a result of the storm. This toll mounts every day because people lack vital services; about half of the island still doesn't have power, which one can easily surmise would not be the case in a wealthy, Trump-supporting suburb hit by a similar disaster.

Cruz has become the most powerful voice on Puerto Ricans' behalf. A little over five years ago, when she launched her bid for mayor, not many people in Puerto Rico had even heard of her. To win election, she cobbled together a coalition that included LGBTQ voters and students, and withstood attacks by her incumbent male opponent, who referred to her as "that woman" and accused her of being a Venezuelan-style socialist. (Cruz is not quite that, though she embraces strong left-populist politics.)

Cruz's efforts on behalf of the victims of Hurricane Maria have made her a hero in Puerto Rico, and unfortunately for Trump, she will probably be around a long time: Cruz is widely expected to run for governor of the commonwealth in 2020.



AP PHOTO / VANESSA SERRA DIAZ

Racism by the Numbers

In a bid for respectability, white supremacy is cloaking itself in social science.

KHALIL GIBRAN MUHAMMAD

Last fall, Derek Black visited the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University to talk about hate. Derek is the son of Don Black, the founder of Stormfront.org, the oldest and one of the most influential hate sites on the Internet, boasting some 300,000 members, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. The site features vile anti-Semitism—"the Jewish problem" and the alleged Jewish conspiracy to "rule the world" figure prominently—as well as old-school white supremacy, with references to the "Browns and Blacks" flooding the United States and Europe. I joined Derek on a panel to learn more about his father's teachings and also why he had abandoned them.

Derek is a soft-spoken, wide-eyed twentysomething with a round face and a mop of reddish-brown hair. He's thoughtful, clear and careful in his speech—a perfect example of how the movement's leaders have cultivated a politics of respectability. Supporters must follow the New Orleans Protocol, a code of conduct signed by white-nationalist leaders during a Crescent City gathering in 2004 headed up by former Klansman and Louisiana state representative David Duke. The protocol eschews violence, demands upstanding behavior, and insists that everyone "maintain a high tone" in their "public presentations."

A child of the movement, Derek noted that his father has worked for decades to mainstream it. The 2017 riot in Charlottesville, Virginia, where white supremacists staged a massive rally and were confronted by left-wing protesters, proved to be a watershed moment: When President Trump blamed both sides for the violence, Derek said, it was "the first time that I, or any of them who were at that thing, or any white nationalist who wasn't there, has ever seen anybody hesitate and say, 'Well, hold on, we need to give these people a fair shake'.... There's nothing that could have been more encouraging than that."

"Liberalism will have to deal with race reality sooner or later."

—BadMonkey, a commenter on the white-supremacist website *American Renaissance*

Although Derek escaped what might seem like a foreign land to most people, even he is impressed by how much more popular white-nationalist views have become "in this last year and a half, where so much of what I taught people to talk about is mainstream political commentary."

Indeed, one year into the Trump administration, media coverage and commentary on American racism in its many forms has raised difficult questions. Ever since Charlottesville, numerous press accounts of "the Nazi next door" have elicited outrage. When *The New York Times* profiled Tony Hovater, a suburban Dayton, Ohio, man with a fondness for *Seinfeld*, NPR, and fine cooking, last November, readers blasted the paper for normalizing hate. Many argued that providing a platform for white supremacists would only spread their ideas and further their cause. *Times* national editor Marc Lacey replied: "My outrage is the fact that bigotry is going mainstream, which is what this piece was trying to describe."

These days, much of the alt-right has gone mainstream, often cloaking its racism in pseudo-social-scientific theory. I first got a taste of this style of debate 10 years ago, when I criticized Bill Cosby in *The Washington Post* for his national tour emphasizing "personal responsibility," in which he lambasted black America's poorest and mass-incarcerated for their bad English, bad dress, and bad behavior. One reader called me out for supposedly hiding black crime rates, writing: "Blacks accounted for 13% of the U.S. population in 2005, but were victims in 15% of all nonfatal violent crimes and nearly half of all homicides."

My essay also garnered attention on Jared Taylor's *American Renaissance* website, home to a more refined and learned community of "race realists" and white advocates. While the commenters used more extreme rhetoric than would be allowed in the *Post*'s pages, there was still a lot of talk about crime statistics and test scores. "Does this writer not understand what a 'Bell Curve' distribution is?" asked a commenter called ZorbatheGreek. Another, BadMonkey, wrote prophetically: "Liberalism will have to deal with race reality sooner or later."

I reached out to Jared Taylor, curious as to whether he thought these ideas had gained more credence in the Trump era. Like Don Black and David Duke, Taylor has been in the trenches a long time, organizing to make America white again. But unlike most in the movement, Taylor is an ideas man, Yale-educated and with the demeanor of a member of the coastal elite. He also promulgates long-discredited theories that race and IQ are the best predictors of human capacity. Taylor considers Charles Murray, co-author of *The Bell Curve*, "the best-known today of any American academic that writes seriously about racial differences and IQ." Murray's renewed popularity on college campuses may be a telling sign.

Taylor thinks there has definitely been growth in the movement lately, but adds that it is "really very hard" to quantify. On the president's impact, he's emphatic that Trump has played a "very, very minor role.... Far more important was Trayvon Martin; far more important was what happened in Ferguson" with the shooting death of Michael Brown. Taylor asserts that the media "played up some kind of vicious white racism" but that ordinary people are sick of it. He cites George Zimmerman's acquittal and the Justice Department ruling that Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson was justified in Brown's shooting as proof that it was all just "a baloney story."

Taylor believes that plenty of Americans, even liberals, instinctively share these views but have been stifled by political correctness. Indeed, four days after Zimmerman's acquittal, the Pew Research Center asked people in a nationwide survey if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the verdict. The racial divide could not have been starker: 86 percent of blacks surveyed expressed dissatisfaction, compared with 30 percent of whites. When re-

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spondents were asked if "race is getting more attention than it deserves" in the Zimmerman case, 60 percent of whites agreed, compared with just 13 percent of blacks.

According to Derek Black, his father targets liberals who believe that blacks and some Latino groups have a crime problem and are less intelligent. "The goal of the movement is to get people who are already against affirmative action and Hispanic immigration, and who are already worried that black communities aren't policed enough, to be explicit that they think it *is* about race," he says.

Shortly after the Zimmerman verdict, my wife Stephanie and our children attended a bar mitzvah for the son of some dear friends down the block. Their kid now goes to the same high school as our daughter—a school that counts among its alumni both the musician Lauryn Hill and the alt-right shock jock Mike Enoch. At the reception, people chatted over cocktails, and another neighbor—whose son is friends with our son—expressed his support for the acquittal, insisting that Zimmerman had killed Martin in self-defense. "I was taken aback," Stephanie recalls. Our neighbor had "no discernible empathy for Trayvon."

The near-universal condemnation by average Americans of hate and extremism on the right—for example, in response to the *Times* article that "normalized" Nazis—obscures more than it reveals. Many American liberals are having similar conversations about race, over things like public safety and policing or the changing demographics of their neighborhoods. Gentrifying parents in Brooklyn move their kids to whiter schools much like school-secessionist parents in Alabama do. In New York, one of America's bluest cities, a majority of white residents told Quinnipiac pollsters, over the course of several opinion surveys from 2012 to 2013, that they approved of the police department's stop-and-frisk policy by a margin of more than 2-to-1 over black New Yorkers.

Thus, by focusing their opprobrium on the Nazi next door, white liberals are missing the very real threat posed by a growing white nationalism. These new white supremacists are coming not with tiki torches but with reasoned arguments, buttressed by facts and figures, to make palatable racist ideas that many people, deep down, have always felt were true. And while white liberals have the luxury of deciding whether to maintain a fight against this white-nationalist threat, black people don't; neither do Mexican Americans, Muslim Americans, or any number of immigrants. The question of "normalizing" hate can only be asked from a position of relative safety and naïveté. As Shane Bauer, a reporter for *Mother Jones*, tweeted in response to the *Times* story: "People mad about this article want to believe that Nazis are monsters we cannot relate to. White supremacists are normal ass white people and it's been that way in America since 1776."

In Martin Luther King Jr.'s final book—published in 1967, two years after the civil-rights movement had begun to reveal its limits—he proposed that white Americans needed to be more honest with themselves. "To live with the pretense that racism is a doctrine of a very few," King wrote, "is to disarm us in fighting it frontally as scientifically unsound, morally repugnant and socially destructive. The prescription for the cure rests with the accurate diagnosis of the disease." ■

LEADING THE RESISTANCE

Andy Slavitt

A public servant gets political.

JOSHUA HOLLAND

The prototypical member of the resistance may be that nice woman down the street who'd never shown much interest in politics until she was shocked into action by Donald Trump's election. But there are also those mild-mannered public servants who'd largely worked behind the scenes—until they recognized Trump as a threat to the democracy they had taken for granted under previous administrations, and then threw themselves into the fight to preserve it.

Andy Slavitt served as the acting administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) during the last 21 months of the Obama administration, commuting between Washington, DC, and his home in Minnesota. In the weeks before the 2016 election, he and his wife had been pondering whether they'd take their two boys out of high school and move to the capital if Hillary Clinton asked him to head up the agency on a permanent basis. It was not to be. The day after the election, Slavitt says, "I delayed my emotional response and started calling governors and health-plan CEOs and anyone I could get in touch with to make sure that everyone understood that it wasn't going to be as easy to get rid of the Affordable Care Act as some people thought."

At the CMS, Slavitt had started his days reading e-mails from some of the 100 million Americans who rely on the centers for insurance; it's what gave his job "meaning." And when the candidate who'd vowed to repeal the Affordable Care Act "on day one" became president-elect, Slavitt says, "my message to everybody at the time was: 'There are too many people who count on this law'" to allow Trump to destroy it.

Soon after Trump took office, Republicans made "repeal and replace" a top legislative priority. Slavitt noticed that they "were voting to repeal the ACA but refused to hold town halls" on the issue. He spent the next several months issuing Republican lawmakers a challenge: either face their constituents or debate him. If they refused, Slavitt would come to their district and hold a town hall himself.

No one accepted his challenge, so Slavitt traveled from district to district, often on his own dime, explaining to some 35,000 Americans how the ACA's repeal would affect them. He took to social media to inform and energize hundreds of thousands more. He worked with any resistance group that reached out to him. And, in the end, he helped to rally the tsunami of opposition that would turn repeated attempts to kill the law into a massive debacle for the Republican Party.

The Republicans have since moved on to pass a tax-overhaul bill, despite its unpopularity. The core problem today, Slavitt says, is that lawmakers are no longer accountable to their constituents. His next project, he adds, will work to change that dynamic; he'll be unveiling it later this month.

ICP Museum

Edmund Clark, Redacted image of a complex of buildings where a pilot identified as having flown rendition flights lives, from *Negative Publicity: Artefacts of Extraordinary Rendition*, by Crofton Black and Edmund Clark

Edmund Clark:
The Day the Music Died
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EDGELAND

Paul Kingsnorth's novels and essays capture an England coming apart

by CHRISTOPHER de BELLAIGUE

This man with a name like the frost on an apple tree is 45 years of age. He grew up in the south of England and read history at Oxford. His family included bus drivers, businessmen, policemen, and shopkeepers. His father, Robert, was a self-made man (until Thatcher, the term was a derogatory one in Britain) who forced him to go on arduous walking holidays, during which he wept from tiredness but also learned the names of the flowers and birds of his native land: yellow rattle and red clover among the uncut hay; curlews and lapwings overhead. His grandparents ran an old-fashioned English sweetshop, the kind of place I remember (I'm a year older than him) where one could buy a paper bag of sherbet lemons or barley twists and which is laughable to imagine existing now, in our England of brands, sameness, and huge, sprawling supermarkets.

While many of his Oxford contemporaries went on to take their places in Tony Blair's proudly cosmopolitan Britain, Paul Kingsnorth was drawn to the more subversive anticapitalist movement that came to life around the turn of the millennium. From his base at *The Ecologist* magazine in London, where his co-conspirators included Zac Goldsmith, son of one of Britain's richest entrepreneurs (and a future Conservative Party politician), Kingsnorth went to Mexico to succor the Zapatistas, dodge riot police at the G-8 summit in Genoa, and parley with the armed resistance in West Papua. The experience of observing a movement in which he was also a participant fed his first book, *One No, Many Yeses* (2003), in which Kingsnorth laid out a fervent, optimistic, sociable worldview that would waft ordinary people everywhere to victory against the international plutocrats ranged against them.

An advantage for the young Englishman out in the world was that the movement was a blast. Seemingly as significant to Kingsnorth as the agitations he described was getting blurry with fellow subversives. "I'm being swung from South African to Colombian to ecologist

Christopher de Bellaigue is the author, most recently, of The Islamic Enlightenment: The Modern Struggle Between Faith and Reason.

ILLUSTRATION BY **TIM ROBINSON**

to anarchist, from Brazilian to Bangladeshi, from cocalero to tribesman," he writes of a drunken dance session on the sidelines of a Peoples' Global Action confab in 2001, and all are "determined and somehow together." It's another kind of globalization, mirroring the one that he and the others are in Cochabamba—or is it Johannesburg, or Boulder, or Prague?—to combat, and "as the pipes and drums roll on and the circle turns faster, throwing people half off their feet, I can't see anything that will shut them up…make them go home quietly and stop causing so much trouble. Apart from winning."

That "apart from winning" reads poignantly in the light of subsequent events. World capitalism has of course scored further victories, in spite of the economic collapse of 2008, capturing not only forests and city centers but also the Internet. At the same time, world protest has splintered into myriad movements capable of uniting only briefly—if at all—behind figures like Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn. For much of this tumultuous period, Kingsnorth was a full-time environmentalist, fighting highway projects in his native land and agitating for action on climate change. He also wrote his second book, *Real England* (2009), in which he decried the damage being done by big business to the country's living pores: its pubs, canals, farms, and shops.

Real England was much admired when it was published. David Cameron (then leader of the opposition) cited it, as did the archbishop of Canterbury; Mark Rylance kept it close while rehearsing *Jerusalem*, Jez Butterworth's satirical play about modern progress. If the book was more elegy than clarion call, this was perhaps because the activism in Kingsnorth was gradually being subdued by a realization that much of society, far from being the innocent victim of global business, was more than happy to sacrifice the old web of human relations for the new matrix of cultural convenience. (And Cameron, once in power, immediately forgot most of the book's admonitions.) Kingsnorth began to lose faith in the ability of the human race to correct its view of the earth as an object to be manipulated. It is easy to believe that this was a case of the heart being led by the head: The effort it required to remain optimistic was taxing his serenity, and his loss of faith darkened his views on climate change.

The Wake
A Novel
By Paul Kingsnorth
Graywolf. 384 pp. $16

Beast
A Novel
By Paul Kingsnorth
Graywolf. 176 pp. $16

Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist and Other Essays
By Paul Kingsnorth
Graywolf. 208 pp. $16

From a problem that might be solved, or at least substantially mitigated, it became a fate that had to be endured.

In 2007, Kingsnorth's father took his own life following a nervous breakdown. "His death," Kingsnorth told the Scottish writer Peter Ross this spring, "is the moment when my work changes a lot," becoming bleaker but also releasing him from the expectations of worldly success that his father had cherished for him. Two years later, Kingsnorth and another eco-fatalist, Dougald Hine, founded the Dark Mountain Project, an ecologically minded movement whose goal was to reconnect "over-civilised" writers to the natural world. *Uncivilisation*, as the project's manifesto was called, painted a picture of greenhouse gases and other abominations (industrial abattoirs, bream-trawled ocean floors, dynamited reefs, and so on), presided over by a largely indifferent humanity that was prepared to absorb only those green values that were reconcilable with material ones.

"Today's environmentalists," Kingsnorth and Hine wrote, "are more likely to be found at corporate conferences hymning the virtues of 'sustainability' and 'ethical consumption' than doing anything as naive as questioning the intrinsic values of civilisation.... We do not believe that everything will be fine. We are not even sure, based on current definitions of progress and improvement, that we want it to be."

Compared with Kingsnorth's early radicalism, *Uncivilisation* was notable for the poverty of its ambition and the defeatism—nay, misanthropy—of its authors. This turned can-do environmentalists against it. George Monbiot, an influential author on issues of land use and climate change, demanded to know how many people "you believe the world could support without either fossil fuels or an equivalent investment in alternative energy," adding: "Under your vision, several billion perish." In 2014, Naomi Klein criticized Kingsnorth for "giving up.... We don't have to accept failure. There are degrees to how bad this can get. Literally, there are degrees."

Kingsnorth apparently relished his own pessimism. "I withdraw from the campaigning and the marching," he announced in the first issue of *Dark Mountain*, the new periodical that he launched with Hine in the spring of 2010. "I withdraw from the arguing and the talked-up necessity and all of the false assumptions. I withdraw from the words. I am leaving. I am going to go out walking." The place of human beings in the world, Kingsnorth had decided, is ancillary. "This edgeland," he observed while standing on the sands of Morecambe Bay in northern England, "this world of wing and water" is indifferent to us.

The Paul Kingsnorth of the current phase began to take shape in 2009, when he and his wife, Jyoti, moved away from Oxford, whose grungy charm was being killed by property developers and the impulse to "tidy" anything (Kingsnorth's favorite pub, for instance) that was shabby or down-at-the-heels. The couple made their home in Cumbria, in the northwest of England, before crossing the Irish Sea to settle in County Galway, one of the least populated regions in Western Europe. There, as Ross discovered when he visited them last February, the couple are homeschooling their two children in the ways of self-sufficiency, teaching them to plant seeds, light fires, and handle tools, because, as Kingsnorth put it, "the more of those things you know, the more connected you are to life, the more control you have, and the more choice you have over how to live." The idea, he told Ross, is to "slow down and pay attention to things.... Sometimes it's best to do nothing."

As a Zen Buddhist, Kingsnorth is aware of the significance of withdrawal—all that doing nothing can actually lead to something—and the instinct to put down thoughts, communicate, and exhibit has intruded even upon this high-minded exile. Although he vowed to give up the words, he hasn't done anything of the sort, continuing to work on *Dark Mountain*, receiving interviewers and profile writers, and updating his personal website. Two new projects—a collection of essays detailing his disenchantment with conventional envi-

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ronmentalism and two novels of a planned trilogy stretching from a brutal English past to a dystopian English future—chronicle a man who has reached maturity without losing his breath. These middle years may turn out to be his creative inflection point, with youth and old age cupped in a delicate balance and the eye looking both backward and forward. While the new works might appear to lack a single unified thrust, inhabiting different forms and different times, their underlying concerns—the future of the planet, the future of nations, the future of belonging—are those of the time we live in, making them a coherent whole.

Kingsnorth's new book of essays, *Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist*, ranges widely, moving from conventional environmentalism to his connection to nature to his dislike for the hubris of human gods. Modern conservation isn't an exercise in ingenuity, as the can-dos would have us believe, but rather forbearance. Kingsnorth doesn't hide his contempt for the kind of environmentalism that regards nature as so much untapped clean energy and a mountaintop as a view awaiting hikers. One gets the impression that if Kingsnorth ran the world, large areas of it would be removed from the human ambit.

Like Rousseau—and, more recently, Pankaj Mishra in his book *Age of Anger*—Kingsnorth scorns the idea that progress will inevitably bring comfort and happiness to all. The civilization of a species that willfully soils its own nest cannot be worthy of the name. In one of his more somber moods, he writes that

> we have cut ourselves off from everything else that lives, and because we don't believe that it does live, we have ended up talking only to ourselves.... We are becoming human narcissists, entombed in our cities, staring into our screens, seeing our faces and our minds reflected back and believing this is all there is. Outside the forests fall, the ice melts, the corals die back and the extinctions roll on; but we keep writing our love letters to ourselves, oblivious.

Inadvertently or not, Kingsnorth has backed into the limelight with his departure in midcareer, midlife, mid-everything. His Irish sojourn has coincided with the Brexit vote, leading to the irony of an English patriot casting a "Leave" vote from his home in fervently pro-Europe Ireland. To be fair, Kingsnorth has long argued for decentralization and localism, and in one essay he cites George Orwell's observation that "England is perhaps the only great country whose intellectuals are ashamed of their own nationality." But Kingsnorth is no tub-thumping John Bull; in the same piece, he also calls for an England that "pays attention to its places rather than wiping them out in the name of growth; an England that doesn't have imperial designs; an England that doesn't want to follow America into idiotic wars."

Kingsnorth the essayist can be prescient and impassioned, but his main character is often himself, so there's a fair amount of navel-gazing. The protagonists of his two novels—essentially the same man, separated by a millennium—also have much of Kingsnorth, but passed through thick grains of history and culture. His fiction debut, *The Wake*, was published in 2014, and there is now a sequel, *Beast*, which he rattled out in his Galway writing shed. The good news is that Kingsnorth is a fantastic novelist—lyrical, instinctive, and true. It's the wild world, the sense of a nation, and a desire for freedom so powerful that it's the neighbor of insanity which communicate in his fiction.

In *The Wake*, set around the time of the Norman invasion of 1066 and written in a synthetic language that Kingsnorth derived from Old English, his protagonist, Buccmaster, describes being taken by boat by his somewhat intimidating grandfather through the fens, the waterlogged peatlands in the east of England. This is the occasion for passages that link boy, man, and fen in a language familiar yet hidden, obliging us to slow down and pay attention to things. It's a day when

> all is bright when blosms is open and buterefleoges is floteran on them. we was in his boat again and on to the water of the fenn and in litha [May/June] with all bright and hued wyrmfleoges [dragonflies] and all the heofon writhan [heaven writhing] with lif and with the risan sunne on the nebb [face] of the water the fenn what can be so blaec and deop and cold on this mergen [morning] was a thing of great wundor.

The boy's apprehension increases until "after many hours...there opened before us a great mere," or lake. Rowing to the middle, Buccmaster's grandfather instructs him to look down, and there,

> under the boat under the water and not so deop was the stocc [trunk] of a great blaec treow [tree] torn to its root lic a tooth in the mouth of an eald wif. a great treow it was wid and blaec...and as i was locan [looking] i seen another and another and i colde see that under this mere was a great holt [forest] a great ealde holt of treows bigger than any i had seen efer...the treows in the mere was beorned [burned] in to me that daeg [day] and until i is in my deap graef [grave] always i will see them all.

This underwater holt used to be home to the pre-Christian gods whom Christ has supplanted—though not in the heart of the pagan grandfather. Buccmaster's relations with the wild world grow intimate and reverential; the fens and holts are a refuge from the invaders whom he and his band of rebels, the "grene men," battle to expel, launching ambushes and assassinations before melting back into nature. Under the Norman yoke, Buccmaster's mind runs to a better past: "our fathers was freer than us our fathers fathers stalced [stalked] the wilde fenns now the fenns is bean tamed...for efry cilde [child] born there is sum new law a man sceolde [should] be free and alone on his land the world sceolde not cum in until he ascs [asks] it."

In his next novel, *Beast*, Kingsnorth takes the protagonist of *The Wake* and brings him forward to our time. He also sends him properly round the bend. His name has been modernized to Buckmaster, and he has abandoned his partner and daughter and embarked on a quest he cannot define, squatting in an abandoned farmhouse above a moor in the West Country. "From the east I came," he tells us, "from the dead fens, because of everything that grew there, because of what was lodged in the dark waters."

It's a considerable achievement for a writer to pass from one highly distinctive register to another in successive novels, and Kingsnorth pulls it off, punching out a disjointed, staccato

English that conveys Buckmaster's fear and alienation as a storm closes in:

> I think that something is coming. I don't know what. I wonder if it will thunder, if there will be lightning. Lightning is drawn to iron. There is iron on the roof, but there is iron too in the deep rocks of the moor. I am living on and under iron, there is metal everywhere, metal and flesh and wet, black trees.... Last time there was a big storm, the track from this place, which leads along the combe about a mile down to the road, became so pitted and full of great gashes that I could barely even walk on it. It was as if something had attacked it.

This is the prelude to an accident or apocalypse that sunders Buckmaster's narrative. We next find him lying in agony in another version of the same world. The novel's fabric is also torn. The word "collapse" is left unfinished, then there are two blank pages, and we resume with the Y in "my" on the page after that. Buckmaster's recovery from his unexplained injuries is now the story. We also find ourselves in a changed environment. The weather is hot and unremitting, it never gets dark, and silence reigns amid the blanched, lifeless moors, heightening Buckmaster's isolation. His own needs have also diminished—he finds he can get by on little more than water. Still, something impels him to limp down the track outside the farm, under the hot, flat sun.

A little later, coming out of a medieval church where he has rested, he catches a fleeting glimpse of a black animal, low to the ground and a couple of yards in length, emerging from the thorns on top of a stone wall before disappearing. The shivers that run through Buckmaster's body are a fear "much older than reason. It was as if something had been triggered." He resolves to track the animal and maps the surrounding farmland so he can comb it methodically over the next few weeks. "I needed to create a system. A system would lock out the fear and the silence and the despair and the whiteness."

What is the meaning of Buckmaster's quest for the cat, as he calls the creature, and who is hunting whom? It is presumably for us to decide what predator circles around Buckmaster, and he around it. There are more split-word chapter breaks and abrupt changes of direction, and memories come at him, and at us, like shards. At one point, he cheers the apocalypse: "I closed my eyes and saw my mind straining at the bars lashing out at the world all of the smallness and stupidity. I saw it all finally crushed all the people flattened the glory of the end of it all." By the end of the book, the punctuation has dropped away, the long high keening of the cat is drawing close, and Kingsnorth gives us wide entry into Buckmaster's insanity.

Beast is about what is going on inside someone's mind as a functioning natural world disappears, and Buckmaster's rage against humanity is the vengeful cousin of the *Uncivilisation* manifesto, which in turn sits in uneasy equipoise with the Galway missionary work for which Kingsnorth makes a case in *Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist*. Indeed, for a man who has argued that the only sensible worldview "must orbit around compassion," Kingsnorth is capable of stunning callousness. He has expressed sympathy for the ideas of Theodore Kaczynski, better known as the Unabomber, who in the name of a revolt against technology murdered three people and injured 23 more over a 20-year period. Writing of his father's suicide, Kingsnorth has confided, "The secret thing about suicide is that it is enticing.... [S]uicide is protest, suicide is willful disobedience. It pisses in the face of progress and all its wan little children, sucking so desperately at the withered teat of immortality."

Reading Kingsnorth's work, I have felt concern for the well-being of a man whose brilliance shines from dark recesses. For Kingsnorth to eke out the good that he can, to live according to his ideals, to grow his plot and his children—this is to accept a proportionate stature in the world, and perhaps influence people by his example. This may be the proper limit for his engagement, which, as we have seen, remains considerable even in exile. It may get more so with the publication of the third in the Buckmaster trilogy. As Kingsnorth tells us:

> In nature I see something divine, and when I see it, it moves me to humility, not grandiosity, and that is good for me and good for those I come into contact with. I don't want to be a god, even if I can. I want to be a servant of god, if by god we mean nature, life, the world. I want to be small in the world...help it along, protect myself from its storms and try to cause none myself.

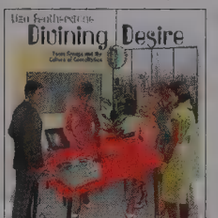
This is a good, manageable aspiration, even if its author is also capable of great wrath. More of us should adopt it. ■

in our orbit

From the Bronx to Oxford and Not Quite Back

By Norman Birnbaum

This new memoir from the noted sociologist and *Nation* editorial-board member tells the story of the Cold War through his life on the left, with portraits of Henry Kissinger, Willy Brandt, and Isaiah Berlin. (January 2018)



Divining Desire

By Liza Featherstone

This sweeping history by the *Nation* contributing writer reveals how focus groups became fixtures of how companies and politicians sell products and messages. (February 2018)

Cruel Futures

By Carmen Giménez Smith

The poems in the new collection from *The Nation*'s poetry co-editor analyze pop culture, explore the lives of women, and sing with beauty and wisdom. (April 2018)

A Nation Unmade by War

By Tom Engelhardt

Engelhardt argues that in the past decade and a half, the United States has won little and lost a lot from its constant wars; under the Trump presidency, he fears, the US will lose even more. (May 2018)

PERSISTENT PRECARITY

The making of a generation

by SARAH JONES

In the October 8 edition of *The New York Times Magazine*, an ad for Gradifi takes up the entire inside cover. A smiling young woman stares out, wearing a yellow sweatshirt with a number emblazoned where the name of a college would usually be. "Why did she borrow $67,928 for tuition?" the ad muses. "She did it to work for you."

Gradifi, it appears, is a student-loan payment plan that employers can offer their staffs. The tagline—"Gradifi is gratitude"—doesn't ameliorate the ad's horrors. We don't know the woman's name, her course of study, or even the name of her college; we only know the amount of her debt. Gradifi can help her, but only if she stays with an employer who uses it.

Sarah Jones is a staff writer for the New Republic, *where she covers politics and culture.*

How did we get to this mutated state of indentured servitude? Many boomer and Gen X pundits might argue that the young woman has inflicted this situation upon herself, tainted as she is by a generational penchant for bad decisions. Millennials like our unnamed debtor have murdered napkins, diamonds, golf, sex, marriage, and homeownership. They are, depending on who's writing the clickbait, irresponsible basement dwellers or innovative disruptors. The specifics change, but the general refrain does not: One generation will always whimper about the moral decay and rebellion of the next. But with millennials, something sits under the surface: What we are witnessing is a generation suffering not only from the perennial maladies of social change but from a particular set of indignities spawned by an economy that extracts and exploits, an educational system designed to enforce those deprivations, and a set of politicians who not only believe there is nothing wrong with this state of affairs but insist on calling it liberty. Boomers and Gen Xers might like to comfort themselves by saying the kids are inadequate, but mostly it's been the inadequacy of their two generations' public policies.

Kids These Days
Human Capital and the Making of Millennials
By Malcolm Harris
Little, Brown and Company. 272 pp.
$25.98

In *Kids These Days*, Malcolm Harris sets out to kill this myth, and he succeeds. Harris's book is a methodical deconstruction of one of the stupidest tropes to degrade recent discourse. The "millennial" is created, not born, as Harris shows, and as is true of all creations, her qualities reveal more about her makers than they do about her. From preschool to

ILLUSTRATION BY **TIM ROBINSON**

college to their entrance into a precarious labor market, Harris tracks how young people in America operate within a system that reinforces the economic, educational, and political injustices that sort us all into upper and underclasses. The proverbial participation trophy, the frantic visions of meritocracy, the generational recriminations—they've always said more about the parents of millennials than millennials themselves. It's not the kids these days that we need to worry about, but the world their parents helped build. "In order to fully recognize the scope of these changes," Harris explains, "we need to think about young people the way industry and the government already do: as investments, productive machinery, 'human capital.'"

Education, appropriately, occupies much of Harris's attention. Today's young adults are more likely than those of any previous generation to hold a bachelor's degree, meaning that they have spent most of their lives in some academic setting. And the state of American education supports Harris's argument: Parents might not consciously think of their children as cogs in an uncaring wheel, but the idea that children are future workers sits not far removed from that mechanical metaphor. Such ideas have permeated every stratum of American society, and they manifest in explicit ways. In Harris's telling, children bear groaning homework loads; activities aren't about having fun as much as they're about accumulating extracurriculars for future college applications. It's all labor, but it's never framed as such, even though the priority is clearly future productivity rather than the production of educated adults. An emphasis on homework over learning through play, soaring college fees subsidized by predatory loans—these are meant to manufacture fresh grist for a voracious mill. Input *x*; get *y*. Repeat.

But this academic culture is a limited one by necessity: Its exclusivity mirrors the structural demands of the economy it perpetuates. It doesn't exist in every primary or secondary school; instead, we associate it mostly with predominantly white schools, in suburban or wealthy urban enclaves. As Harris notes, children of color are overpoliced rather than encouraged to overachieve, and while he doesn't discuss low-income rural schools, they too lag behind wealthier ones on the markers of college enrollment and scholastic achievement. Thus the ruling class reproduces itself through one of the main criteria of our new economy: educational merit. Poor students and students of color, meanwhile, either suffer from malignant neglect or find themselves in schools in which they are little more than lab rats to self-appointed reformist saviors and their boosters in the public and private sectors, including Salesforce chairman and CEO Marc Benioff, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, and Netflix CEO Reed Hastings, who often test educational software at underfunded schools.

These projects are not entirely new. The tech industry has long promoted and funded coding programs for public schools, and it's not the only culprit. But the portrait that Harris draws of primary- and secondary-school education is an unsettling one; it is fixated, in his telling, on job training. That fixation can lead to disturbing alliances between school administrators and entities looking for a guaranteed supply of cheap, ready labor. Citing the work of education scholar Nicole Nguyen, Harris notes an increasingly popular and disturbing trend: the implementation of preprofessional homeland-security programs. "It starts innocuously," Harris writes, "but by algebra they're calculating parabolas using the trajectory of an American sniper's bullet in North Korea." JROTC is almost quaint by comparison.

Government and industry find themselves aligned, then, on one grim goal: School is for training workers. By the time today's young adults finish high school, they've learned to think of themselves as employees-in-waiting, and punishingly high college expenses only reinforce that perception. The notion of vocation is almost entirely gone; instead, college education is for growing one's paychecks.

Except that those paychecks frequently don't grow, at least not for recent college graduates who have sought to pay off their debts in the post-2008 economy. "Wages for college-educated workers outside of the inflated finance industry have stagnated or diminished," Harris warns. Colleges are not what their administrators advertise them to be: They do not, in fact, create the kind of social mobility that they and our meritocratic culture promise. Students from low-income families are likely to stay poor, college degree notwithstanding; many suffer from severe food insecurity while undertaking their studies.

These persistent inequalities are particularly pronounced among people of color. A recent Demos report showed that college degrees do not eliminate, or even seriously shrink, the racial wealth gap. Meanwhile, college costs continue to rise, for reasons that again have little to do with the actual wants and needs of young adults but instead reflect administrative bloat and state disinvestment. Exploitation and grift are real campus scandals occasionally covered by the press, but they somehow don't inspire half as much concern from the boomer and Gen X commentariat as do the activities of zealous young students who hate Nazis.

The facts beg us to ask what point there is to higher education—but in our current economic moment, millennials have very little to no time to wonder about anything; they only have time to study and then work. Higher education spits them out, already burdened by debt, into a floundering job market. And God forbid they should decide to become academics themselves: They can likely expect a future as underpaid permanent adjuncts in a system determined to suck them dry.

Once out of college, things only get worse. In part, this is because of the way in which the educational system has been built. It is also because of the economy itself: Since the 1970s, the economic policies of Democratic and Republican administrations alike have concentrated wealth among a select few households, even as deep poverty increases and many workers struggle to make do with minimum-wage jobs. All of this has only worsened after the crash of 2008. As Harris notes, since then the number of Americans working part-time jobs has doubled. With deunionization on the rise, often facilitated by public policy, that trend isn't likely to change. This persistent precarity benefits bosses, not workers, and it especially harms young workers just beginning their careers.

Conservative and liberal boomers and Gen Xers unite on this front—their disdain for "the youth"—though they may well be the last generations guaranteed the full benefits of Social Security, an artificial scarcity they helped create. The children to whom they show such derision will know deprivation because of their elders. "One of the most popular adjectives for Millennials is 'entitled,' but the entitlement system wasn't built for us," Harris writes.

At times, *Kids These Days* can feel ruthless. Its injustices build, one on top of another, and wall the reader into claustrophobia. But that's not Harris's fault; the feeling will be familiar to anyone of a certain age. Courtesy of the book's cover, I know that Harris and I share a birth year, meaning that we both came of age amid economic collapse. This was an instructive time to be a young adult. The recession injected honesty into our lives. Many of us had, until then, believed in some

variation of the same deceit: If you are very good and study very hard, the Job Santa will reward you. Instead, most of us likely know someone who's at least contemplated selling plasma or eggs to make rent. We give most of our time to our employers, and—let's be honest—most of us don't get Gradifi in return. Eventually we'll get old, and by then the pensions and Social Security that supported our grandparents and parents may no longer exist.

What young people are facing is a crisis, though you'd never know it from the headlines. "Blame Parents for Millennials' Laughable Fragility," sniped *National Review*. "Crybaby Millennials Need to Stop Whinging and Work Hard Like the Rest of Us," announced *The Telegraph*'s laughably named "Thinking Man" column. At British *GQ*: "Millennials. Stop being offended by, like, literally everything." In the run-up to the 2016 presidential election, commentators escalated the millennial-bashing to new peaks: Clara Jeffrey, editor in chief of *Mother Jones*, tweeted that she had "never hated Millennials more" than when a *New York Times*/CBS News survey that September showed lukewarm Clinton love among young voters.

Kids These Days answers a political moment defined both by youthful outrage and by the patronizing responses to it, which deny that it is informed by lived experience. By capturing how millennials have arrived at this point, we may find a way to free them from being scapegoats for boomers and Gen Xers. The usual suggestions—protest, vote, run for office—are fine but ultimately insufficient, as Harris notes. The problem is systemic, and therefore the solutions must be too.

In *Kids These Days*, Harris doesn't parse out many of those solutions. His book is more diagnosis than prescription. "The only way to win is not to start," he writes at the end, leaving us to wonder exactly what that means. But we can start, perhaps, by identifying our real enemies. The first and greatest lie of capitalism is that it promises us free choice; Harris demonstrates that this promise is hollow. Many of the problems he describes need anticapitalist solutions: The redistribution of resources would not only properly fund public schools and colleges, but allow children and young adults to direct their lives independent of the demands of capital.

When kids demand these solutions, as they're doing with increasing frequency, their outrage isn't the problem. As *Kids These Days* makes clear, they're only asking for redress. This is not generational conflict, but rather class war. And the kids didn't start it. ■

SUCKED INTO A GRAVE

Errol Morris's paranoid style

by EVAN KINDLEY

In 1953, Frank Olson, a bacteriologist employed by the Army Chemical Corps to research biological weapons, fell to his death from the 10th floor of the Statler Hotel in New York City. Olson's death was ruled a suicide. In 1975, the Rockefeller Commission issued a report detailing abuses by the CIA, including, among other things, experimentation with LSD as part of its MKUltra mind-control studies. Olson, it was revealed, was one of a number of government workers who were surreptitiously drugged, apparently for interrogation purposes.

The Rockefeller report charged that Olson's consumption of LSD contributed to his mental deterioration—he had a nervous breakdown shortly after—and may have led to his suicide. After the report came out the Olson family received an apology from the US government, which

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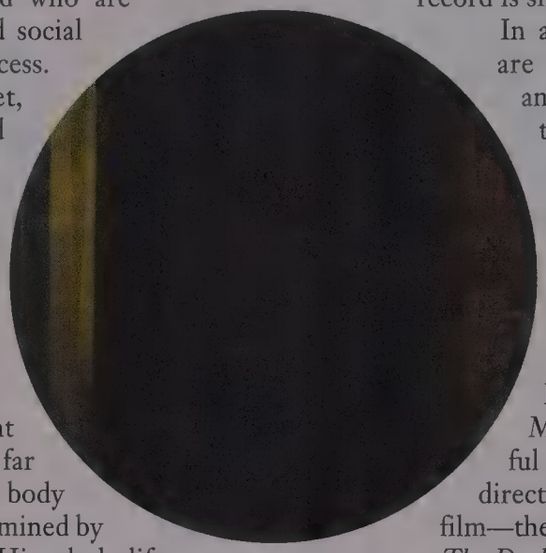
was delivered personally by Gerald Ford at the White House, and a $750,000 settlement; there was also a congressional hearing, which turned up little new information and had the effect of forestalling a criminal investigation.

These events, and their aftermath, are the subject of *Wormwood*, Errol Morris's new Netflix miniseries. The spirit of *Wormwood*, and of Morris's political sensibility generally, can be traced to the early-to-mid-1970s, a kind of golden age of anti-government paranoia. It was the time not only of the Rockefeller Commission report but also of Watergate, the Pentagon Papers, revelations about the FBI's COINTELPRO activities, and, in the arts, landmarks of paranoid style like Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* and Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation*.

The whole ethos is conveniently embodied, in *Wormwood*, by Seymour Hersh, the legendary investigative reporter who covered the Olson story in 1975 and who appears for an interview in the show's final episode. (Hersh's cagey, truculent responses to Morris's questions—"What do you mean by 'What do you mean?'" he snarls at one point—are one of *Wormwood*'s highlights.) Yet one of the arguments Morris prosecutes in *Wormwood* is that even Hersh, that high priest of skepticism, was not suspicious enough, that there is more to the story of Frank Olson's demise than the most hardened cynics ever dreamed.

There are two basic types of Errol Morris film. One is the character study of an obsessive individual pursuing a difficult, perhaps impossible goal. Morris loves his Ahabs: the animal-obsessed eccentrics of *Fast, Cheap & Out of Control* (1997); Fred A. Leuchter Jr., the electric-chair designer who becomes a Holocaust denier, in *Mr. Death* (1999); Joyce McKinney, the woman who kidnapped a Mormon missionary, in *Tabloid* (2010). The other type is the historical film dedicated to patient but passionate critique of the American security state. *The Fog of War* (2003), *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008), and *The Unknown Known* (2013) are all works in this mode, and it is these later films that have brought Morris the most mainstream success and, in the case of *The Fog of War*, a long-deserved Academy Award.

Wormwood blends these two genres. It's another meditation on the corrosive effects of secrecy on democratic institutions—Donald Rumsfeld, the antihero of *The Unknown Known*, even makes a cameo appearance at one point—but at its center is a story about an Ahab: Frank Olson's son Eric, whose combination of nerdy affability and quiet anger is riveting. Morris dwells on a parallel between Eric's situation and *Hamlet*: Both are stories of sons who are inquiring into the mysterious deaths of their fathers, and who are forcing personal and social upheaval in the process. But, unlike Hamlet, Eric isn't driven mad by grief; if anything, it imposes a certain logical rigor and discipline upon him. His search for the truth about his father's death began in 1975 and continues up to the present day; he even went so far as to exhume Frank's body in 1994 to have it examined by a forensics expert. "His whole life has been sucked into the grave," a friend comments at one point.



The most compelling parts of *Wormwood* use techniques from Morris's other films to explore the consequences of Eric's obsession: montages of archival documents rendered in extreme close-up, historical footage, and other visual ephemera intercut with long interviews, shot from multiple angles, in which Morris himself is effaced (often out of focus, or viewed from behind) but not completely removed. These sequences belong with the best of Morris's films in the Ahab genre: If that were all *Wormwood* was, it would be almost the equal of *Mr. Death*, which is still, almost 20 years on, the director's masterpiece.

What separates *Wormwood* from the rest of Morris's oeuvre, however, is its interpolation of fictionalized scenes that re-create the final days of Frank Olson's life. These go beyond the elaborate reenactments Morris staged for *The Thin Blue Line* (which infamously invalidated it for consideration for the Oscar for Best Documentary): They're full-fledged dramatic scenes, in a kind of murky film-noir style, featuring the perpetually saturnine Peter Sarsgaard as Frank. It isn't entirely clear what Morris is trying to do with this material, which makes up roughly half of *Wormwood*'s running time, and whose basis is the declassified documents that the CIA provided the Olson family concerning the circumstances around Frank's death. Is he staging different plausible scenarios in order to determine the truth, as he did in *The Thin Blue Line*? Commenting on the blatant artificiality of the CIA's version of events? Or is he attempting to gratify Eric's fantasy of perfect knowledge by bringing his father back to life and speculatively filling in the gaps where the documentary record is silent?

In any case, the scenes are dramatically inert and often confusing—though it's possible this is the point. A dull script by Steven Hathaway and Molly Rokosz is partly to blame, but Morris's direction doesn't help matters. While Morris is a masterful documentarian, he's directed only one fiction film—the ill-fated and little-seen *The Dark Wind*—and on the evidence of *Wormwood* that's no great loss. Some clever Hitchcockian flourishes notwithstanding—there's a nice sequence in which an elevator slowly climbs from the first to the 10th floor, and we watch the numbers light up one by one—Morris shows little feel for this kind of filmmaking. The style of these scenes is overwrought, full of canted angles, split-screen effects, and frames within frames. It's as if Morris is so afraid of making a mere television show that he overcompensates with "cinematic" touches, trying to prove his auteurist bona fides. But the resulting sequences feel less like excerpts from a movie than like video-game cut scenes: I kept looking for the button that would let me skip to the next section.

Make no mistake: *Wormwood* is worth watching, flaws and all, and not only because it offers a timely reminder that, the Mueller investigation notwithstanding, our nation's intelligence agencies are not always on the side of the angels. The paranoid spirit of 1975 lives on, but ironically it is our president and his right-wing base who are most suspicious of "the deep state" in 2017, while many on the left cheer it on. If Morris overreaches with *Wormwood*, it's nonetheless good to have him back, in this moment of political and epistemological chaos: He reminds us that skepticism is the only thing we can trust. ■

OPTIMIST LOVE SONGS

Lil Peep was emo-rap's most visible representative, but what set his music apart was not its despair but its deep sense of hope

by BIJAN STEPHEN

Gustav Åhr, better known by his stage name Lil Peep, had just turned 21 when he died last November of an overdose of Xanax, the prescription anti-anxiety medication, and fentanyl, a powerful opioid. For some, this sudden end was expected—Åhr never hid the fact that he was a heavy substance abuser, in either his lyrics or his life. Days before he was found dead on his tour bus, he left posts on his Instagram account that alluded to a deep depression. The caption to one photo read: "When I die You'll love me." Another was a video that showed him taking unidentified pills, likely Xanax. After the news of Åhr's death broke, tributes poured in from across the industry; everyone from Juicy J to Alice Glass noted the tragedy of his passing.

But what has really troubled people is the sense that his pain had always been there, and that most of us had overlooked the warning signs. For many, self-destructive behavior feels like a vital part of the creative process; with Åhr, his intoxicated state had itself become part of his art. There's a quote I saw recently that I can't find anymore, about Jean-Michel Basquiat—it goes something like, "A junkie who can sell a painting for $60,000 isn't a junkie; he's a dead man." Its meaning is obvious: Success doesn't solve problems for artists so much as it exacerbates them.

Despite a career cut so short, Åhr released four mixtapes and six EPs, which share the genuinely transformative nature that all good art has. He was a savant in the way he put songs together; he had digested contemporary rap, pop punk, and indie rock to such a degree that he could tease out their similarities and weave the disparate strands into a sonic tapestry that was wholly his own.

Sometimes this took the form of a dare, as in "yesterday," a song from Åhr's 2016 mixtape *crybaby*: The guitars are lifted wholesale from Oasis's global smash "Wonderwall," and there's an absolutely cavernous 808 kick layered underneath. The song's lyrics are equally thrown together: The chorus optimistically describes an attempt to flee psychic pain, while the verse makes excuses for doing too much cocaine and forgetting to write back to a lover. "Yesterday is not today is not the same," Åhr raps. It's slight, a wisp of a track, but somehow you believe it as an optimist's love song. Åhr pulls off the same trick on "white tee": Most of the beat is sampled from the Postal Service's "Such Great Heights," and the lyrics describe meeting a woman at the club who falls in love with our protagonist and then does all his drugs.

But what's odd here is that the rap aesthetics feel rote, as they do in most of his songs—somewhat performed or put on—and this is because Åhr was indeed more rocker than rapper. His songs, for better or worse, are more closely linked to the emo music they're often an homage to than the rap music from which they take their sonic direction. The songs are short, brooding, and duplicative of the worst parts of the emo scene's numbing, narcissistic misogyny. Women flit into and out of the songs, but we never hear from them other than as objects that dispense or deny affection, or as anything separate from the singer's feelings. Writing in *Pitchfork* on "The Unlikely Resurgence of Rap Rock," Jayson Greene observed: "Whether you were shouting 'give me something to break' because your girlfriend cheated on you, or screaming 'shut up when I'm talking to you,' because, well, your girlfriend kept talking, rap rock has historically been a one-sided conversation between a raging man and his raw, unprocessed emotions."

Bijan Stephen is a writer in New York. His work has appeared in The New Yorker, The New Republic, Esquire, *and elsewhere.*

Greene locates the revival of rap rock—which Åhr mastered and became a prominent exponent of—in Lil Wayne's *Rebirth* (2010), a critical flop that nonetheless influenced the current crop of emo-rappers by combining rock's brashness with hip-hop's élan. One could also add Kanye's R&B-inflected detour through Auto-Tuned songcraft in *808s & Heartbreak*, which inspired rappers to hybridize their genre—Drake being the most famous example, and Kid Cudi one of the more successful. But it was Åhr who made a specialty out of merging emo rock with rap, using hip-hop as a vehicle to elaborate on emo's alienation, anxiety, and depression (although both genres make a habit of tracing the contours of male pain). That feels especially timely given how much rock's influence has waned and hip-hop's stock has risen.

Åhr had many peers in the emerging emo-rap scene, which is based largely on SoundCloud and sprang up only in the past few years. Of his contemporaries, more than a few seem poised to go mainstream (or have already made the jump): Lil Uzi Vert, Lil Pump, Lil Xan, Lil Tracy, and the rest of GothBoiClique among them. The scene's producers—Charlie Shuffler, Smokeasac, Horse Head, Lederrick, Nedarb—have alreaady begun to change the way popular music sounds.

But Åhr was there first, and what sets his music apart from his peers' isn't its nihilism or its themes. Instead, it's that the songs he left behind showcase an overwhelming ambition and sense of leadership—or perhaps it's more a sense of responsibility—for the musical scene he spearheaded. Åhr was emo-rap's most visible representative and the genre's most mainstream success. "beamerboy," which came out last January, neatly describes the intersecting pressures that Åhr felt himself under:

You see me doin' shows now, I'm a pro now
I got hos now and I got some dough now
But they don't wanna hear that, they want that real shit
They want that drug talk, that "I can't feel" shit
I'm never comin' home now, all alone now
Can't let my bros down, can't let my bros down
I feel like I'm a no one, that's what they told me
I'ma show ya, baby I was chosen

Åhr was the one who was supposed to make it—and, by the end, he did. Critics from *Pitchfork* to *The New York Times* have recognized what Åhr represented; by the time of his death, they had grown enamored with the sounds they were hearing and had begun to legitimize the scene's musical project. That work will continue. But mainstream recognition never mattered to the people the music was for—the people Åhr's age and younger, who saw themselves in it as they never had before.

Knowing what we know now, it is hard not to hear a sense of foreboding in Åhr's music. He seemed to know what his habits were doing to him, or at least where his path might end. It came through in his lyrics as a wish to change—articulated but not actualized. Take "falling 4 me," from *crybaby*:

Hold me, I can't breathe
I don't wanna die, I don't wanna OD
Cup full of lean, pure codeine
Ten lines deep, now I can't see
I don't wanna be this way for good
I don't wanna live the way I should
Born in the 'burbs, but I'm big in the hood
Tell me that I can't, but I know that I could
I can't hear you callin' to me (yeah)
I can't see you're fallin' for me (yeah)

That's the whole song. It samples Radiohead's "Climbing Up the Walls," an eerie jam from *OK Computer* that's also about internal demons. ("And either way you turn / I'll be there / Open up your skull / I'll be there / Climbing up the walls," Thom Yorke croons on the original.) At the center of "falling 4 me" is the tough relationship between an addict and his substance of choice.

Behind Åhr's music is the opioid crisis, which continues to rage. The current moment is perhaps the most we've talked about a drug epidemic in this country since the heyday of crack, and it would be easy to take Åhr's thematic fixations as a symptom of that larger dysfunction. But I don't think that's quite right—his music was always about the turmoil of his private life, his emotions. The substance abuse was a part of that turmoil, but it wasn't his only subject.

Even so, Åhr's music functions as a warning. What we've been left with are the barest outlines of what might have been a luminous musical career, as well as a set of hard questions that reduce mostly to: How could this have happened? The way that he spoke candidly about his anxiety and depression—in a *Pitchfork* interview a year ago, Åhr admitted that he sometimes suffered so terribly that he wished, some days, not to wake up—was rare for a musician of his stature, and we took notice. It was, in many ways, what drew us to the music in the first place. But it also spoke of a person in tremendous pain. Did our consumption make us complicit? That's a question I can't answer. All I know is how much more difficult it is to listen to Lil Peep's songs now that there's no space between his life and his death. ■

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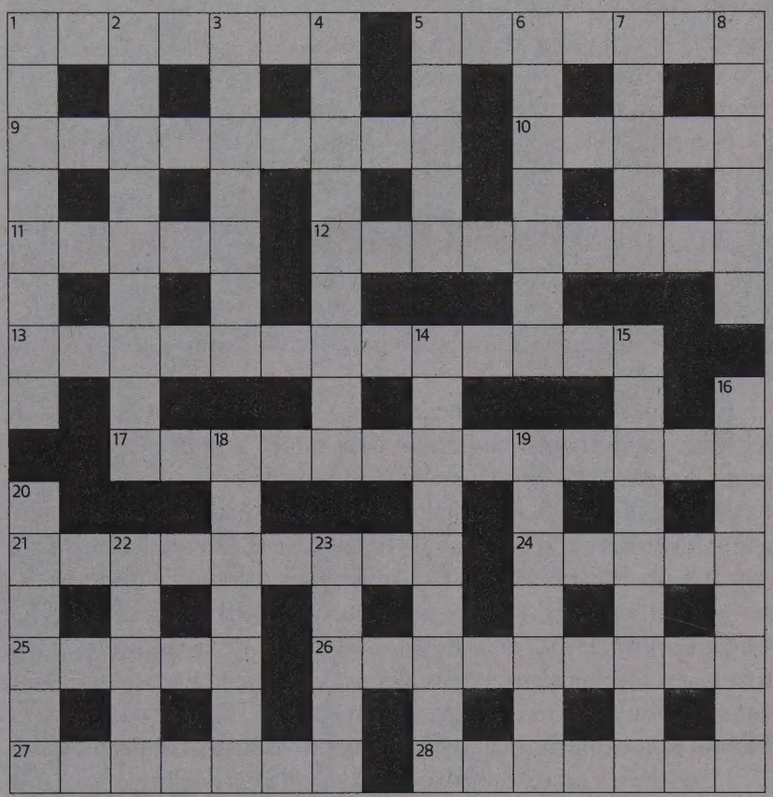
Puzzle No. 3453

JOSHUA KOSMAN AND HENRI PICCIOTTO



ACROSS

1 Nine-dimensional fantasy? (7)

5 In reference to a travel requirement, credit card has no backing (3-1-3)

9 Sticky substance found by apostle in cover sheet (9)

10 Bite a cut of lamb containing a piece of mint (5)

11 Sufficient help may hold it back (5)

12 Drone alit, i.e., crashed in disgrace (9)

13 Design style, mostly garish, originally involves as little as possible (zero, potentially) (5,8)

17 1932 play that clues the answer and location of another entry in this puzzle (6,2,5)

21 Government agent is South American man with a great self-image (9)

24 Attracted Romeo in early morning (5)

25 Attach to a horse (5)

26 What you might enjoy at breakfast: yodeling and skiing, perhaps? (5-4)

27 "Radioactive element is hot," snarled westbound environmentalist (7)

28 A bunch of flowers and no video-game console? Yes (7)

DOWN

1 Irrational presentation of data about iodine is pathetic (8)

2 Clipped oath embraces hip-hop in support of English poet (4,5)

3 Inside trains, handle paints (7)

4 Old soul: "He damaged model home" (9)

5 Impressionist on the rise, making TV malevolence (5)

6 Irreligious California city held captive by evil curse (7)

7 Olivia, distraught after losing one instrument (5)

8 Chief of police interrupts excellent meal (6)

14 Impatiently gets into neat prose with revisions (5,4)

15 Artwork of famous Asian twin going mad (9)

16 Waits in the bleachers on the outskirts of Berkeley (6,2)

18 Unknown song to belt in African capital (7)

19 Charms football player with corn (7)

20 Pinko subverted government at last with traditional writer's tool (6)

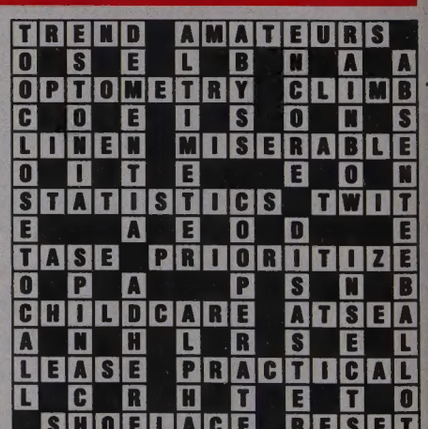
22 Howard to act in musical piece (5)

23 Health clubs overlooking male jerk (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3452

ACROSS 1 T + REND 4 AMA(TEUR)S[s] (*true* anag.) 9 OP(TOM)ETRY (*poetry* anag.) 10 C + LIMB 11 L + INEN (anag.) 12 MI(SERAB)LE (*bares* rev.) 13 STATIST + ICS (anag.) 15 T + WIT[h] 17 hidden 19 PRI(OR + IT + I)ZE 22 CHIL(D + CAR)E 24 initial letters 25 LE(AS)E 26 PRAC + T + I + CAL (rev.) 27 SH(O)ELACE (*Chelsea* anag.) 28 anag.

DOWN 1 letter bank 2 anag. 3 DEM([g]ENT)IA (*aimed* rev.) 4 AL(TIME)TER 5 A(BY)SS 6 E(NCO)RE 7 "reign, beau" 8 letter bank 14 COOPER + ATE 16 DIS ASTER 18 SPINA (anag.) + CH 20 IN SECTS 21 AD HERE 23 A(LP)HA



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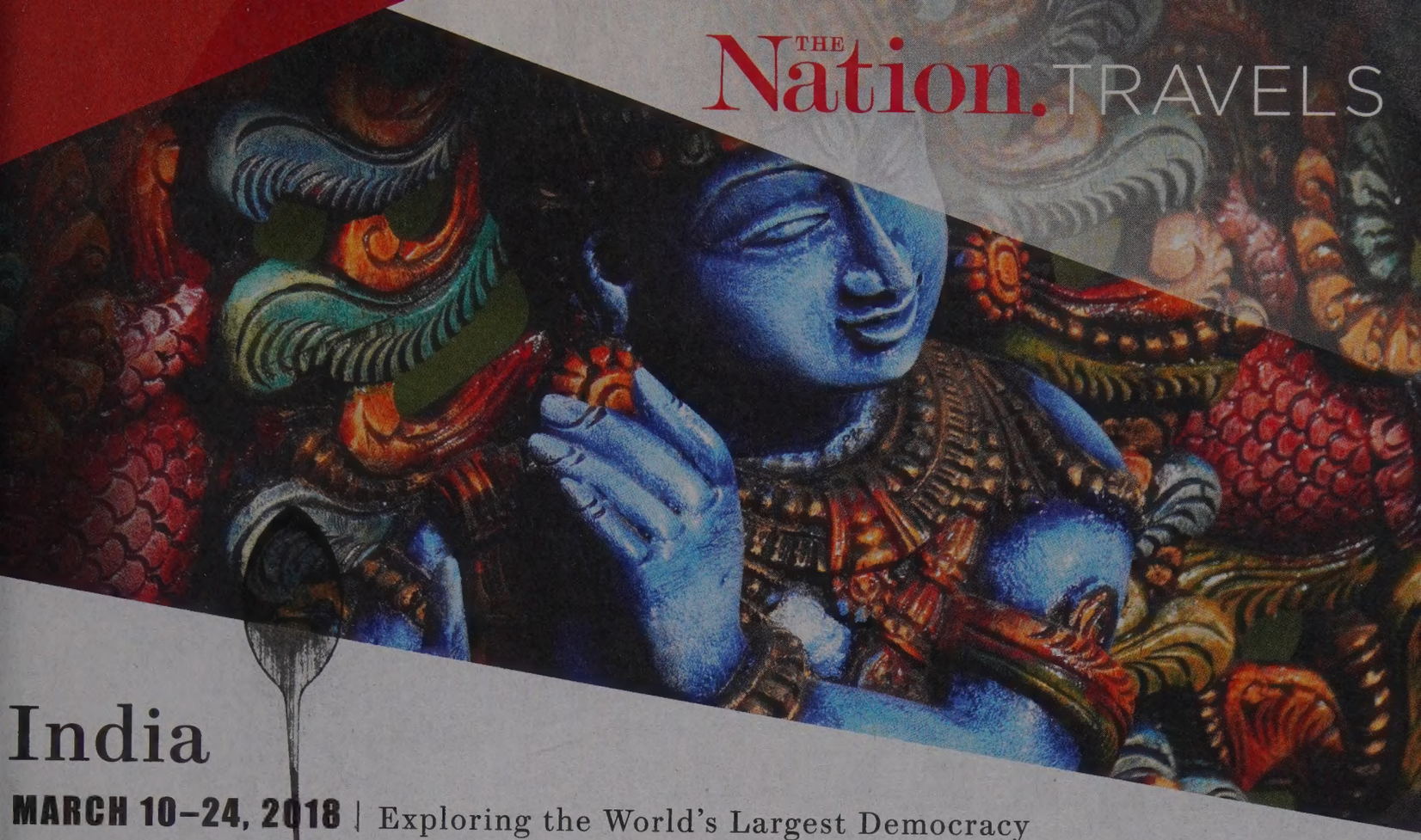

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